



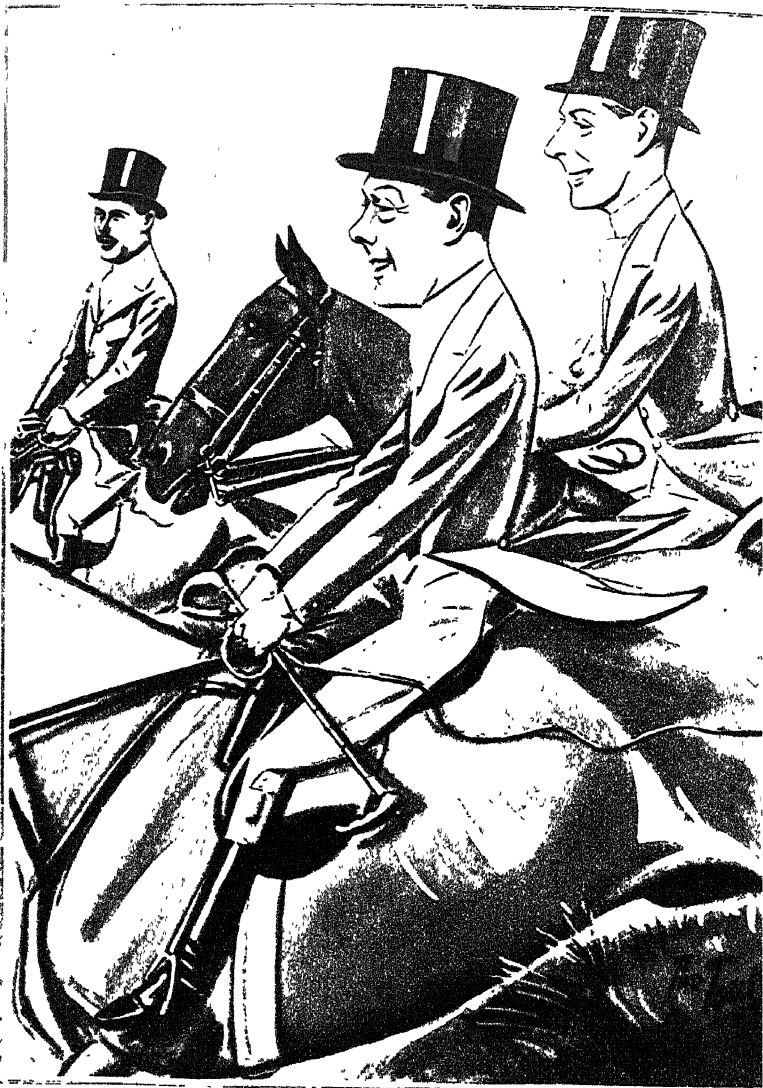
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Rum 'uns to Follow



" THREE JOLLY HUNTSMEN "

The Tatler, 1921

(H.R.H. PRINCE HENRY, H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES, H.R.H. THE DUKE OF YORK)

Rum 'uns to Follow

Memories of Seventy Years
in the Shires

by

A MELTON ROUGHRIDER

Illustrated from portraits and caricatures

With a Foreword by

GUY PAGET

*“ A rider unequalled—a sportsman complete,
A Rum One to follow, a bad one to beat.”*

WHYTE-MELVILLE.

LONDON : COUNTRY LIFE LTD.

First published in 1934

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

To
TOM FIRR, ARTHUR THATCHER
AND
FRANK FREEMAN



MAJOR PAGET ON GOLIATH GOING TO SULBY COVER

By Charles Simpson, R.I., 1931

Foreword

EVERYONE who has any pretence to being a Meltonian, or who has hunted in the Shires, will, I think, welcome Dick Heathen's talks. He keeps us amused with feats of horsemanship, and ever-flowing fund of reminiscence of the last half-century, recalling many old friends with whom we have spent so many golden hours, but who now, alas, have laughed and gone galloping into the Great Beyond.

It has been left to the enterprise of *Country Life*, however, to preserve these memoirs for future generations.

Having drawn Melton, they found Dick in his snug parlour by the Harborough Arms, and appear to have driven him into the open. He went away over a very wide bit of country, embracing most of the Quorn, and bits of the Belvoir and Cottesmore; time about sixty years.

On the next occasion he was found at Welford, and ran a great circle through the Fernie country to ground at Harborough, where he was found some time later, and made a twelve-mile point to Pitsford; then, taking

Foreword

a wide circle almost to Rugby, he got back to Harborough, where he was apparently lost. I only hope they will rouse him again to give them yet another such gallop.

Presumably taking Dick's word for it that I "fancied myself as a literary cove," *Country Life* sent me the results of their enterprise, and asked me to edit them, and write a foreword.

The latter office I accepted with pleasure, but the former I utterly declined. Being Leicestershire, I realised that Dick puts such things better than even so great a master of English as Mr. Winston Churchill, let alone as so very humble a scribe as myself, possibly could, and "them as don't like his style can lump it." I cannot vouch for the accuracy of all the stories he tells, because many of them happened before I was born; but so far as those known personally to me are concerned, and those in which I myself appear, he sticks strictly to fact.

The purity of Dick's Leicestershire dialect has been rather impaired by the misfortune of a board school education, and mixing so much with people who talk B.B.C. It will be noticed that, in moments of excitement or indignation, his language becomes broader.

Covering a period from about 1870 to the present day, these papers deal with the Quorn, Pytchley, and Fernie Hunts, with a racy candour, and have saved

Foreword

for posterity many stories and bits of information which would otherwise have been for ever lost, when, as he says, "he goes to ground."

Dick Heathen's outlook on life is simple. He judges both men and events as they affect foxhunting. That is the standard by which all things must be measured. His judgments are generous and kindly, and he has a keen sense of humour. He has not a single story about anyone that is catty or unkind, and he seems to see only the good in all men.

It is easily recognised that he is a Tory and a Churchman, and no doubt he agrees with Mr. Jorrocks—"What's a M.P. to a M.F.H.?" He says very little about himself; so I propose to do likewise; but I shall not be surprised if those who live round Melton penetrate his identity.

The Golden Age is always supposed to be about fifty years before we were born; but after reading this book one cannot help wishing one had ridden with Firr and Goodall, Coupland and Tailby, and finished up with Thatcher and Freeman. Will the future produce such giants as did the past? and if it does, Shall we be young enough to recognise them as such?

One sad feature of Dick's reminiscences is that, between the time he first dictated them and they came into my possession, several good sportsmen he mentions have passed over the border into the Great

Foreword

Perhaps country—Harry Mills, Sir Maurice Levy, Otho Paget, Lord Churchill, General Archie Seymour, and Mrs. Drummond, good sportsmen all.

“For day must ring to evensong, and after Life’s work is done
We too must turn our bridle rein and follow where they have
gone.”

GUY PAGET.

May, 1934.

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Publisher's Note ♪ ♪ ♪

THANKS are due to Earl Spencer for permission to reproduce the drawing of the "Pytchley, 1878," by J. C.; to Major Paget for the loan of the engraving and key of the Meet at Crick, and of Sir R. Sutton with his Hounds; to "The Tout" and The Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd., for permission to reproduce in this volume the cartoons which appeared in *The Bystander* and *The Tatler*; and to Charles Simpson, R.I., for his portrait of Goliath.

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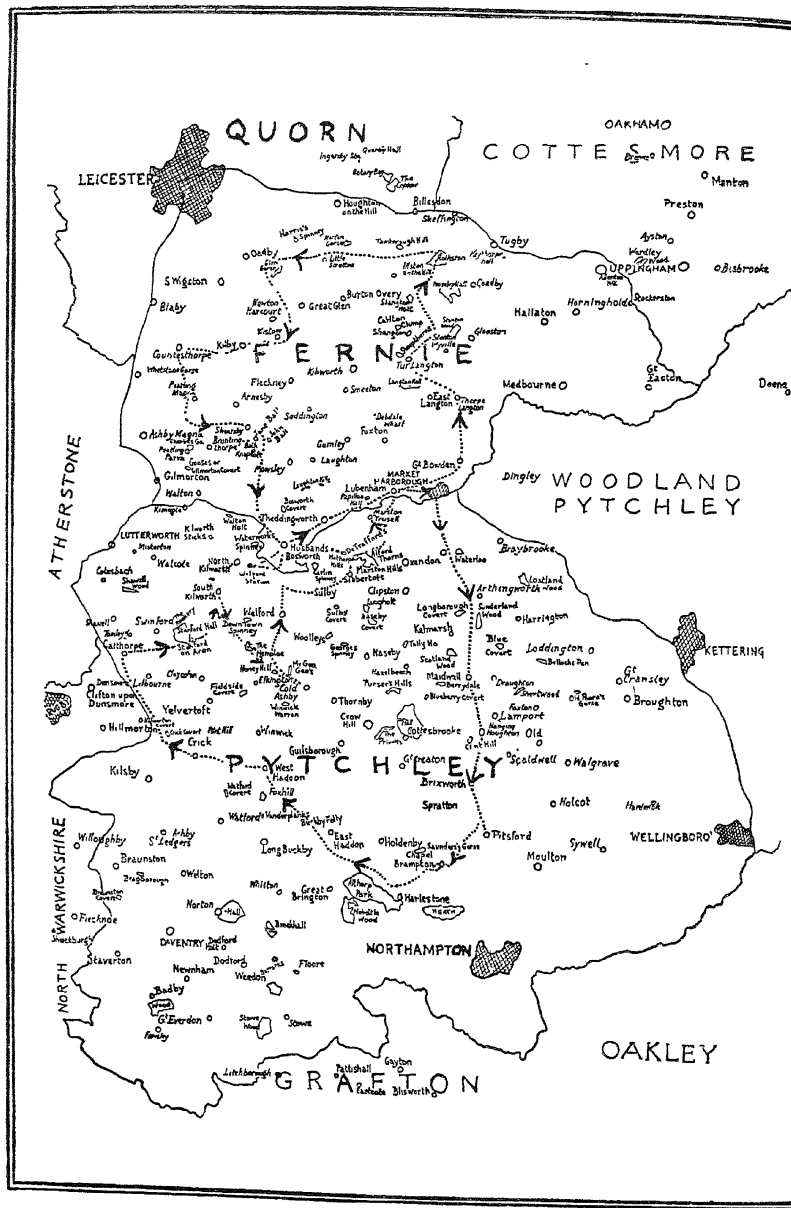
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I — Quorn

WELL, Sir, you want to hear about the huntin' people of the old days, do you? Well, it be a bit hard like; seeing as how I never kept a diary, I be sure to go a bit wrong over a few of my facts and names like.

The first Master I knew was Mr. Coupland, who brought Tom Firr to the country. That would have been—now, let me see—the year the Frenchies and the Germans had a war. I remember that because, what with the new Master and the War, there was some talk that it might interfere with the hunting; but after they once got going, we didn't hear no more about it.

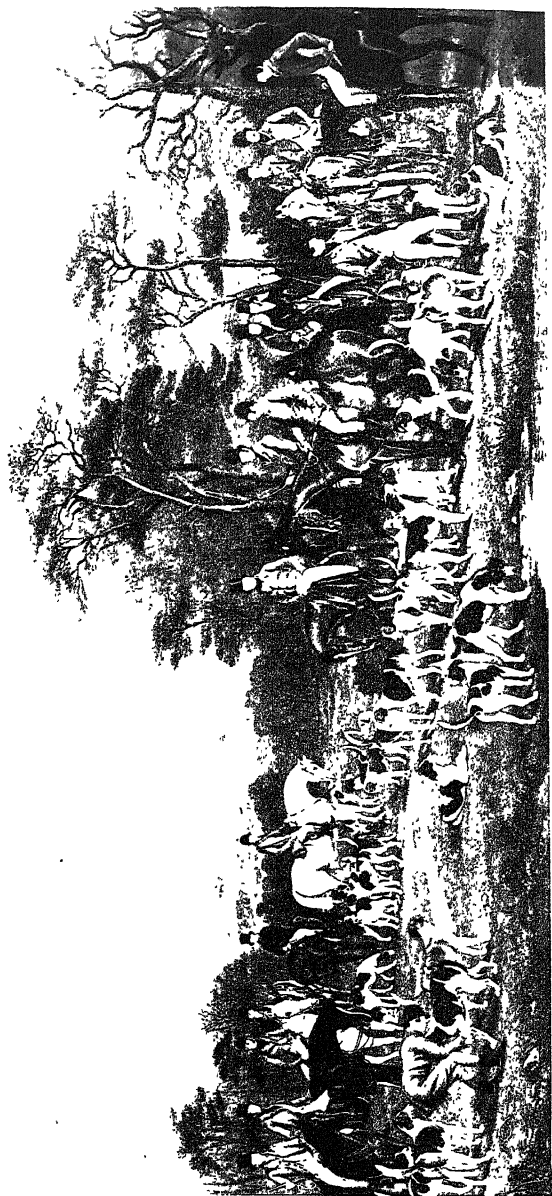
Mr. Coupland were a fine tall gentleman; came from Liverpool; he bought the Craven pack, and it's from them that the present hounds come; never been sold since. He made a big lot of changes in the country; about the best Master they'd ever had; set about it like a proper customer. He really got at the coverts, and spent a pot o' money on them. He started Puppy Shows, and sent his hounds to Shows all over England; very successful he was, too; Quorn Alfred

Rum 'uns to Follow

was the best he ever bred; most hounds in England go back to him. He also started selling the hunt horses every year; quite an event it used to be in Lunnon. I went once, and it was like as crowded as a Melton horse fair.

The first year thirty-one of them fetched three thousand three hundred sovereigns; but he couldn't hunt the country on that number. Two years later he sold forty-six for near five thousand pounds; but money got a bit short as time went on, and when he gived up in 1884 he sold his horses at Warner Sheppard and Wade's, twenty-five of 'em, for just over two thousand pounds. I remember afore the old Repository were built; they used to sell the horses in the old Bell Yard; that 'ud be in '75. The very first horses ever sold there were the Quorn cub-hunters, thirteen of 'em for one thousand pounds.

He it was that started paying earth-stoppers by results. They was paid ten shillings a find, but not if a fox got to ground on their beat. He paid out about £250 a year, and there was never no more trouble about foxes being short. Then he had earth-stoppers' dinners at Willoughby, Loughborough, and Melton; regular blow-outs they were. Him and the Committee used to meet and settle all damage claims afore the dinners. They ought to had done it after, I say; and then there would have been no claims to settle; but



SIR RICHARD SUTTON WITH HIS HOUNDS

From a picture in possession of Mr. F. Sutton of Benham

By Sir F. Grant, P.R.A., 1845

KEY TO
SIR RICHARD SUTTON WITH HIS HOUNDS

HORSEMEN (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)

COL. LOWTHER. LORD GRANBY. MR. GREEN. MR. HOUSTON. MR. WOOD.
BEN MORGAN. MR. T. ASSHETON-SMITH. DUKE OF RUTLAND. SIR RICHARD
SUTTON. MR. H. HEATHCOTE. MR. BANKS WRIGHT. HENRY SUTTON.
CHARLES SUTTON. RICHARD SUTTON.

ON FOOT

JACK MORGAN EXAMINING A HOUND'S FOOT (*ON THE LEFT*). CAPTAIN
FRANK (*ON THE RIGHT*).

Quorn

some people you can't satisfy nohow. They twice had Mr. Coupland into court; once for trespass; but they couldn't fix it on him. Very clever lawyer he had. The farmer said he knew it was the Master and whips, as they had on caps; so he asks him how many people had caps that day, and he said only them, when there were a dozen out; so he lost his case. Caps were more common in them days.

The other time was the year he gave up. A man sues him for £500 for his cows slipping calf, and says as how the hounds chased 'em and bit their noses. Tom Firr were very quiet and dignified in the box; says as he didn't see his hounds chase them cows, and no hounds as he was connected with would ever do such an outrageous thing as snap at a cow's nose. Then lawyer up and proves that the hounds never left kennel that Friday the farmer said they had; it being too hard to hunt that day.

But Mr. Coupland weren't having anything like that, and said it were the next Friday, and they did cross the man's land, and he were willing to pay anything in reason if he had done damage. A real sportsman he were; so the jury says fifty quid were fair.

Poor gentleman, he had bad luck: his son* were killed out cubbing; larking over a gate, poor lad. They say it killed his mother; nice lady she was, too.

* No, step-son.

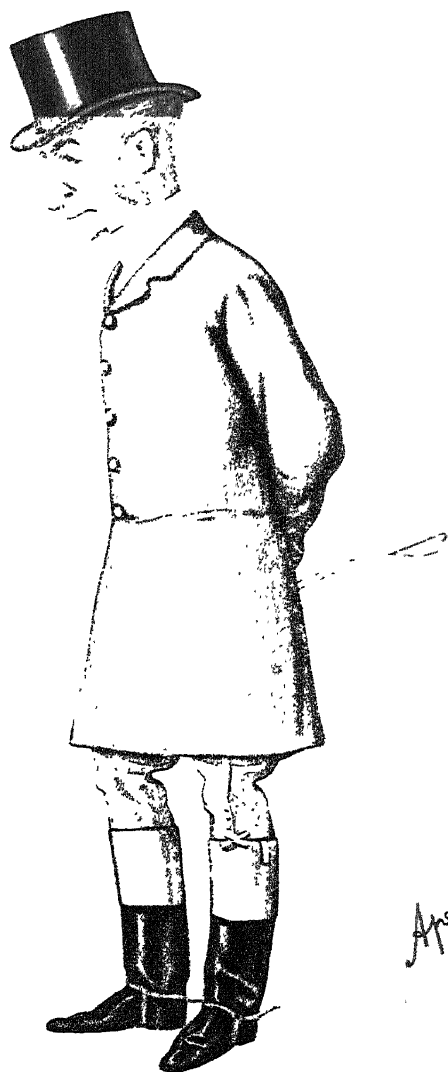
Rum 'uns to Follow

Frank Gillard were his first huntsman, and then Jimmy McBride; but he only stopped for about a couple of seasons, and then comed Tom Firr; that's what made the Quorn. Tom hunted 'em for nigh thirty years.

They had great sport up on the Forest side his first season.* I've seen the Wreak swum more than once. Going away from Bottom's Goss a gentleman took it on; in full flood it were, and yellow as butter; it weren't rightly known who the gentleman was; some said it was a Lord Panmure, but I reckon it were the Hon. Stanhope, Lord Harrington's brother. They be the right breed, every one of them; you remember the old Lord—him with the beard—a proper Lord he were, and his son, too—what was killed jumping a wall a bit back—and Her Ladyship what now hunts the hounds. There's a rider for you! I never wants a neater, or one as loves the game more. I see'd her only last year going proper with the Fernie down away from Shangton Holt, having a rare cut.

Poor lady, she had the most 'strordinary accident: took a very bad fall on her head, and lost the sight of one o' her eyes, she did. The doctors, they couldn't do nothing for her, and she had to wear a patch over it, same as Colonel Alexander—him they ollers calls the Priest—wears over the eye he ain't got. There's a

* 1872.



" THE QUORN "

(JOHN COUPLAND)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1884

Quorn

good man on a bad horse—and his wife too. But I were a-telling you about Lady Harrington. They tells her to be wery careful, and not have another toss on her head; but Lor' love yer! what do you think she does? Goes all over the country a-riding in these ladies' point-to-points, and falls on her head again—and picked up for dead; but when she opens her eyes, sure as I sit here, she'd got her sight back, same as ever she had.

It's funny that them as loves the game nothing seems to stop. There's Lord Gough; he's only one arm. There were a lady who were born without any hands used to ride with the Pytchley; and Colonel Foljambe and Captain du Boisson have only one pair o' legs between 'em; but they're all first-raters. Then there were Mr. Cavanagh—he were afore my time—he hunted without arms or legs, and drove a four-in-hand too. The Secretary of the Cottessmore* I expect be of the same breed; I bet he'd hunt if you cut his head off, he's that keen.

There I be, off the line already; so hark back! The other what swam it was Captain Pennell Elmhirst, what lived at Brooksby—him what used to write so beautiful in *The Field*; he swum it near Thrussington Mill. I remember the old miller he was that flummoxed he went as white as his flour. They had a fine run Mr.

* Major Cavanagh.

Rum 'uns to Follow

Coupland's first season, right into the Duke's country; and when the Duke meets the Melton gentlemen at Denton next day he says, "So you rode all over my country yesterday morning, went back to lunch at Melton, and rode over your hounds all the afternoon."

Very wild them Melton gentlemen were. They kept far more horses than they do nowadays. Lord Wilton kept twenty-five; so did Major Paynter; while Sir Frederick Johnstone had thirty, and no end more had a dozen. The Prince of Wales used to stay with Sir Frederick about that time. The first time as ever I see'd him was at Thrussington Wold, and a lot of snow about; had the hounds out specially for him they did. His 'Ighness took a fall, but didn't hurt hisself, in a good hunt they had from Gaddesby to near Hungerton Foxholes. It would be in Mr. Coupland's second year that he planted the Prince of Wales's Covert at Baggrave. There was a great to-do; General Burnaby, a real gentleman of the old school—with the Guards in Russia he were—had an arch put up at the gate, and gives a great breakfast at the Hall, and then they all goes out, and there were a great A. E. cut in the turf where the middle of the covert was to be, and His 'Ighness, he put in the gorse seed, and they cover them up, and everyone cheers real hearty, and goes off to have a hunt, and runs to Barkby and Beeby, if I remembers aright.

Quorn

It was from the Prince of Wales's that Firr got a tumble and broke a leg. It were a bitter cold day, not fit to hunt, it wasn't; but the gentlemen over-persuaded the Master, and, at the very first fence away, Firr's horse slips up, and he weren't out again that season.

It's all very well for the members of the hunt; they can go home when they choose, jump when they choose, and walk when they choose; but the servants have to keep with the hounds, whatever the ground is like. No; a Master should never let hisself be talked over on a doubtful day. No one what has any sense goes out on a doubtful day. Why they calls it doubtful, I der know; for there ain't nuffin' doubtful about it; if there's a scent, there's no doubt you'll do in a horse, and if there ain't, you'll just be frightened, you will; so there's no doubt you won't enjoy it either way. Redic'lous nonsense, that's what it be.

There's a funny mistake in Mr. Davenport's book, the one all about what I am a-telling of you. He says that the famous Dick Christian, father of Dick what hunted hounds under Mr. Tailby, piloted King Edward when he first comed to Melton. Dick were a wunnerful old fellow, we all know; but I don't think as how he would have got His 'Ighness very far, seeing as he went to ground in Melton cemetery five years afore the Prince ever see'd Melton.

Rum 'uns to Follow

True, Dick did pilot the Prince of Wales when he was with Sir Gilbert Heathcote; but it weren't this 'un; it were his great-uncle, when he were Prince Regent, nigh fifty years afore!

It's funny how mistakes grow. See that there picture? It's called "Sir Richard Sutton and the Quorn Hounds"; Sir Francis Grant painted it—him what married the Duke's* granddaughter,† and hunted from Melton—father o' Miss Grant, what still lives there near the railway. Well, it were painted in 1845, and shown at the Academy, Lunnon, in 1848, the year Sir Richard took the Quorn, he being Master of the Cottesmore then. The church in the background is Langham, near Ranksborough. I got that from old Mr. Harry Davenport—him what used to live at Ashlands, and write for the Lunnon newspapers. Rare old sport he were. He were a cousin of the Suttons, and his father were parson at Skeffington same time as Mr. Dick—him what started the Fernie hounds—had the hall. The Bishop they used to call him; ollers the worst rips, parson's sons. Listen to this.

When King Edward came to hunt with Sir Frederick Johnstone and Colonel Owen Williams at Melton, the meet was at Lowesby, in Mr. Coupland's

* Fifth Duke of Rutland.

† Niece—daughter of Lady Elizabeth Norman.



"FREDDY"
(SIR F. JOHNSTONE)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1878

Quorn

seventh or eighth season—the year there was so much frost and snow.* The Fowkes were very anxious that they should find on the Lowesby lordship, but there ain't no holding cover on it after snow; so they asks Mr. Coupland as if how as they might make sure of a find in Carr Bridge Spinney, between Lowesby and Baggrave, on the way to the Prince of Wales's covert. The Master, he weren't having any—not for a thousand pounds he swore he wouldn't hunt a bagman; so Sir Frederick Fowke had to drop it, but Mr. Davenport and Mr. George,† they decides as how Mr. Coupland should hunt one for nowt. John Leadbetter—him what used to farm at Thorpe Satchville—got a fox from a drain, and they gets a moonstruck loon, o' the name of Zanker, to turn it out for 'em; but he, the silly, gives the whole show away, he did, by waving the bag in Tom Firr's face, and shouting, "You'll find him in there"; and sure enough they did, and a real fox besides! Mr. Davenport often told me of it hisself, he did.

I don't know why it is, I can't abide a bag fox, though I've see'd some good hunts after bagmen; but it takes all the sport out o' it. Who wants to risk his neck arter, or see, a bagman killed? Seems to take away every bit of flavour, like twice-cooked meat. It

* 1877.

† Fowke.

Rum 'uns to Follow

just ain't foxhunting. But it's a rare temptation to a huntsman in the Shires though. Scent bad, foxes crooked and unenterprising, and none too easy to find; the gentlemen driving the hounds off the line at the moment they want most room, bad earth stopping, hounds short o' blood, and everyone grumbling, and a-saying the huntsman ain't no good, lost his nerve, lost his dash, too old.

Then from a favourite little afternoon draw, when the one-horse-men, who'd know what were up, have gone home, you has twenty minutes of the living best and a kill in the open, and only the whip, and perhaps a kennel-man, in the secret. Do it three times in a week, and he's the best huntsman in England, and every excuse is made for the late bad sport. It won't hurt your hounds either, if you can trust your man not to nick or dust him, and he's honest clean; but play any monkey tricks, and your hounds after a bit will sooner scratch fleas than hunt a clean fox—as happened to a very famous pack we won't mention, thirty years ago, and who've hardly got over it yet. It ollers gets known, and then the Master has to sack his huntsman to save his face, or the Committee sack him. I will say that for Lord Stalbridge—however bad sport he showed with the Fernie when he tried hunting them hissself, he were honest-to-God; though his last year I don't think he hardly killed a fox without dig-

Quorn

ging from November to February. The Pytchley gentlemen called 'em the Bloodless Sports Club.

Funny gentleman His Lordship; like Mr. Tailby, he were very masterful and rude in the hunting field; swear horrid they would; but he couldn't ride like the Squire. I never see'd a better man nor a harder; not that His Lordship weren't hard, but he couldner seem able to gallop at a fence, and took some horrid falls—horse ollers on the top of him—broke their nerve, same as it did his; but he never lost his courage up to the end. I suppose it comes of being brought up in a cramped country. They tell me he was first class down with the South and West Wilts, and I believe it; but, like a lot more, he found the Shires a very different thing. You very seldom hears any swearing nowadays; Mr. Coupland, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Fernie never swore at their field. Neither did Mr. Wroughton, Major Burnaby, Lord Annaly, Sir Charles Frederick, Sir Charles or Colonel Lowther, and a lot more I've hunted under.

The Major had such a funny way with him. A lady was for ever riding over his hounds. One day she sets her horse at a fence just where a hound was getting through. "Can't anyone stop that damned bitch?" he sings out; then very quiet, "I am afraid she's getting in the way of the lady jumping that fence."

Rum 'uns to Follow

Then, drawing the Prince of Wales's, "Will all those ladies who are either beautiful or virtuous come this way. The others can go where they like."

He'd a way with him!

A gentleman whose horse kicked a hound said to him, "I've never known him do that before."

"Take him away, please, because he does it behind."

There were a Captain who was a bit hot racing; and, up north, after he were beat on the favourite, the tykes tried to get hold on him. He were squirting on, very hard, one day near Beeby, when the Major calls out:

"Hold hard; the tykes aren't after you this journey."

Him and Lord Annaly and Colonel Lowther are the best I've ever seen. Swearing never seems to do no good—just makes folks angry, especially if it's aimed at their backs. It generally comes from loss of nerve or jealousy. Mr. Tailby were a terrible jealous man; couldn't a-bear to have anyone in front of him. He cursed Lord Londonderry so one day, when he was living at Keythorpe Hall, that he never come out with him again; went to the Cottesmore, where the present one is; a great loss to the country. Mr. Tailby seemed to think he had a right to jump every place first and where he chose.



S P 24

" THE WARWICKSHIRE "
(18th LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1896

Quorn

He once got up against Lord Willoughby, what were Master of the Warwickshire. He met his master there. He cursed His Lordship for not giving way to him at a gap, when hounds were running; but he told Mr. Tailby straight that, after the flag had dropped, he'd no more rights in the field than anyone else, or at gates either, except by courtesy; he'd have given way with pleasure if the Master had said "Please," but not when he shouted out, "Damn your eyes, get out of my way."

His Lordship once met his match though. A farmer jumped very close on him, so he lets out, "Damn and blast you; you'll be wanting to ride down my back next."

"Not if it's half as foul as your mouth, me Lord," came back like lightning.

The neatest thing I ever did hear were in Owston Wood. Mr. Baird were not at all partic'lar what he said to people—not even to ladies—when he got very excited. The hounds were a-running in the wood, and Mr. Baird gallops round to see if the far side were clear. There he sees two ladies, and screws up his face to tell 'em off. But one of 'em puts up her hands, and says very sweetly :

"That's quite all right, James; we know we're b——y b——hes, but we haven't headed your —— fox!"

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But, as a gentleman said to me: "It's so pleasant hunting with the Pytchley Hounds"—very old-fashioned he were—"you're always addressed as 'Gentlemen,' and generally followed by 'please'! After all, if you hear a quiet voice in front say, 'Gentlemen, hold hard, please,' you naturally try your best to, as you hope he's speaking to you; but, if you hears a raucous voice bellowing from behind, 'God d—you, you blankety blank, where the blank do you think you're going, b—you?' you are likely to go on, hoping he's not alluding to you."

He were right; swearing at a man only makes him angry, whether he's a lord or a groom.

The Squire, just below Theddingworth, cursed his second horseman, and called him a funk, a damn funk. The man said nowt; but next day he rides the second horse, fence for fence with the Squire, only picking out the bigger places. The Squire saw the game, but was too good a sportsman to say ought.

Manners have improved. You don't get gentlemen behaving like one I remember. He once filled the ticket collector's hat with water and crammed it on his head, for no reason whatever.

He were always doing things like that on people who couldn't retaliate for a joke, and then throw them a sovereign. No, nor are there them as would laugh with them either; not that they don't have as much

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fun now as they used to out hunting; but it's all in better part.

I heard one gentleman what never jumped a fence ride up to a very hard man all covered with mud, and ask if he had had a fall.

"Oh no! I do this before I come out, to make people believe I sometimes jump a fence."

To another gentleman who asked the same question he replied :

"Do you think I got off and rolled in a dung heap, like one of your damned lap-dogs?"

But they ain't ollers that polite. Captain de Crespigny, what used to race-ride a lot, took a heavy fall just by Kelmarsh Station; cut his face and lip he had, and were spitting out blood, when up come a Lord and says :

"It's no use your bringing down your broken-down 'chasers to hunt with us; why don't you get some decent hunters?"

That sort of riled the Captain, seeing he were on his nephew's land, and that Lord not owning a yard in the whole country. He goes up to him on his feet, and looks up at him, and says, very savage-like and slow :

"Why—don't—I—buy—any—decent—hunters? I'll tell you; because—I'm—not—half—a—blasted—JEW." Fair spat out the "Jew" he did. We all

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thought there would be a row, but that cock weren't fighting, but just rode away, though he were bigger, and two stone heavier.

The same gentleman was told his father—over sixty he'd be—had had a fearful fall, and he ought to go back to him. All he says is :

“He'll be all right; couldn't kill him with an axe,” and rides on.

Sure enough he were right, for Sir Claude got up and finished the hunt.

Mr. Poyser tells a good tale of hisself. He got bumped into a gate-post and hurt his foot, so sings out :

“Don't shove, damn you! You ain't got the manners of a pig.”

“That's all right, Fred, old man,” says Mr. Reggie Chaplin; “but you have!”

There was a Captain Blair; his wife got dragged and kicked on the head; someone asked him next day how she was, and all he said was :

“Going on splendid, thank you. Women take a rare lot of killing.”

But I heared a very funny thing said—the year they had two elections* it were—the time the Radicals were a-saying they'd ruin all the Squires, same as they have done; that there Winston Churchill—he oughter

* 1910.

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a' known better, too—were one o' the worst, he were. He come to hunt with Captain Guest from Burley-on-the-Hill, and falls and breaks his collarbone. Mr. Brocklehurst asks him what were up.

“Only my collarbone.”

“Pity it ain't your damned jaw.”

Very rude, but them there Radicals they deserve it.

There was a Jewish gentleman, called Lyon, what took Skeffington Vale, and opposed Colonel Gretton for Rutland.* Didn't get many votes; for who would vote for Lyon's tea when they could vote for Burton Ale? Sir Arthur Markham, very nice gentleman otherwise, but he were of the same kidney. Let 'em go and hunt in Wales where they likes that sort, I says.

I seem to have got off the line, babbling like a too old hound.

Old Tom Firr were a wonder; a picture on a horse; never see'd a man sit firmer. Very quiet and silent he were, but what a voice he had, and what an artist on a horn—fair stirred your innar's it did to hear him. Very generous to other huntsmen he was, too. A' heard him say that Frank Gillard were an ornament to his profession. Trained half the best in England.

One day there was a gentleman from the Belvoir

* By-election, 11th June, 1907: Gretton, 2,213; Lyon, 1,362.

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what were over-riding the hounds, and would keep following him about when he was casting; so Tom rides up to a fearful place, with a whopping great ditch on the far side, and makes his horse refuse it. He looks round and says :

“I wish Captain Smith were out; he'd give me a lead.”

At that the gentleman has a crack at it and disappears. Tom just give a grin, and trots off in the opposite direction, where he hits off the line.

But the quarry-men at Mountsorrel served Mr. Leatham worse ner that. He got into a spinney, and calls out to a group of 'em, how were he to get out.

“Here,” they says; and he rides at it and jumps into a pit twenty foot deep. How to God they both weren't killed is a fair marvel; but they weren't hurt. Those blackguards they laughed; b——y murderers, that's what they was. Pity there was no one nigh to give 'em a damned good horse-whipping, that it were.

Talking o' dead horses, have you ever seen a dyed one? There was a lady what had lovely golden hair, Countess of Cardigan it were. She were staying at Melton, and sent a groom to Deene for a bottle of medicine what she'd left behind. But the bottle leaked, and ran down all one side of the horse—a dark bay it was—and next day it were a bright chestnut all



" THE HUNTSMAN "
(THOMAS FIRR)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1884

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one side. Her Ladyship never see it, it being the off side. Lor! lor! how the ladies laughed behind her back.

Funny that, when women lose their nerve, they find out as hunting is cruel. There was Lady Florence Dixie, what used to write to the papers. When she was young no one liked it better; p'r'aps it was because she fell in the brook, when Lord Lonsdale asked the Queen's Stag Hounds to come to Barleythorpe. Funny thing stagging never has gone in the Shires. Lord Cardigan tried it, but it weren't no good. Farmers said that the Queen's did more damage than was done all the rest of the season.

You'll not believe this; the Blankney once ran into Sir Bache Cunard's hounds, having run through the Quorn and Cottesmore country; but it's a fact!

It were Mr. Coupland's last year. Lord Lonsdale had the Blankney, and was invited to meet at Scraptoft. They ran through the Coplow to Tilton Wood, on to Launde, and met the Baronet at Loddington, and they hunted the woodlands together for forty minutes.

The Quorn had a great run about that time, I remember. Captain Boyce, Lady Warwick, and the Duke of Portland all got down at the Twyford Brook. They'd found at Barkby Holt, ran by Baggrave almost to Thorpe Satchville, and crossed the brook, heading

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for Thimble Hall, and on to Forty Pound Gate, where they killed.

There are a lot of funny names in the Quorn country. I'd better tell you what gave rise to them; most people don't seem to know; and when I'm gone to ground, I don't suppose anyone'll remember.

There's Thimble Hall. When Sir Frederick Fowke had a son born at Lowesby, the year of the Battle of Waterloo, he were that pleased he wellnigh went off his head, kept open house for weeks, spent money like water, they do tell me, and to mark the event he built the Lodge on the Tilton—Melton road, a little sort of castle—goatic some calls it, 'cause it's spikey like a goat's horns I suppose, though I think it's more like a stag's; goatic they calls it, but the people, they christened it Thimble Hall, being so small like.

Then Cribb's Lodge is where Tom Cribb trained for his champion fight with Gully, or the Game Chicken, I forget which.

Betsy's Barn is a-telling; but there were a very pretty wench as lived nigh, and were to be found near there as the gentlemen rode home from hunting, so I've been told.

Then they calls the chimneys at Asfordby Iron Works, Tom Boyce's Monument. Mr. Pennington, I think it was, was asked by some stranger what they tall columns on the skyline were; so he ups and say as they



" DOGGIE "
(CAPTAIN ARTHUR SMITH)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1884

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were put up to the memory of a Captain Boyce—another very amusing gent, what had took a fall three or four days before; not that he were dead, far from it. Then there's Lucas's Barn, where a Mr. Lucas got lost in a fog, and couldn't find his way out of the field, so had to spend the night there.

Forty Pound Gate is the big gate at the top of Baggrave Park. It were said to have cost that a hundred years ago—a lot of money then for a wooden gate.

It were just near there I heard a funny thing between two farm-men, what opened it for a toff—from Birmingham by the look on him; he chuck them a copper without a word nor a look, his nose in the air, as if he had a nasty smell under it. Next came the Captain from Scraftoft Hall* with Lord Ranksborough; they pull up, thanks 'em hearty, and talk of the sport, and wishes them good-night. One says to the other :

“There's gentlemen; but then, true gentlemen never suspects 'emselfes.”

Tom Firr used to tell of a fox, which he lost several times in Bunny Wood. He were determined to have him; so next time he runs him to Bunny Wood, he sends on Captain Charlie McNeill—him what used to hunt the Grafton so well, when Sir Sammy Scott were Master. He waits very quiet at the far end, when out came his honour, a bit tired-like; he takes a good look

* Captain Burns Hartopp.

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round, and goes to a muck heap in the field, and rolls round all over in it, and then lied down in a furrow about a hundred yards off.

Some says it weren't fair to have caught him that way; but I say it weren't fair of the fox to do a dirty trick like that.

It was about that time that the Belvoir had an extraordinary run from Harby—the best he ever had according to Frank Gillard—three days before Christmas, the year Voluptuary won the Grand National.* An old grey fox raced away by Hayes Wood, on to Hose Thorns; he didn't enter that either, but on he goes to Long Clawson, on aside the Smite; but he didn't like the look of it, so runs the bank to Sherbrook Covert, where they check for the first time; but he was soon away for Willoughby; his point was the Curate, but he was headed by a fool on a bicycle. This upset him, and he gives a lot of trouble crossing and recrossing the railway, till he gets to Widmerpool Station; but not finding a train convenient to take him back to Belvoir, he decides to call at Flint Hill; but it weren't his lucky day though, for he finds Tom and the Quorn there. He'd done eighteen miles up to there, Frank reckoned. Plough and hares give him a bit of a start. Tom he off with his cap, just like a Lord, and tells Frank, as it was obviously his fox, to carry the horn and hunt

* 1884.

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both packs. You see, it were really Tom's to hunt 'em, as they were in the Quorn country. Tom he always was the gentleman. On they goes to Old Dalby, Saxelby, and kills the old varmint in Welby Osierbed, twenty-six miles as hounds ran, with two seven-mile points.

Frank he gives the mask to Tom, and the brush to Mr. Coupland, 'cause he asked for it; but he ought to have took it back to the Duke.

It was from Welby, if I remember right, that Captain Forester brought a brace of foxes. They ran together all the way to the Punch Bowl; lots o' people see'd 'em, and they were killed within five seconds of each other.

Talking of twin foxes, about ten year back there was reported to be cubs in Carr Bridge Spinney in December, and Will Firth and George Leadbetter set up one moonlight night, and see'd ten cubs and two vixens come out of the same hole and play about. Mr. Elliott, the Lowesby keeper, he saw them too.

Oh! but you want to hear about more recent times. After Mr. Coupland, Lord Manners had 'em for a couple of years. He won the National on Seaman the year before Count Kinsky did; the Count's was Zoedone. Pair of gentlemen them. The Count and Captain Smith was supposed to be the best men in Leicestershire at this time. The Captain—Doggie

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Smith they called him—won the Grand National on Blackberry in 1863; he be still alive, they do tell me, down in Sussex; only one of the lot left. Mr. Coup-land were asked which he thought best. He plumps for the Captain; for, he says, he went as well as the Count on any old skin, while the Count had only the living best.

The Count* went to the Pytchley; a great friend of Lord Annaly's he was. He took on Gibbs as his studsman when His Lordship give up the Pytchley—him as was with Captain Barclay; he's now with Lord Rosebery. He must be well worth a thousand a year to his master; such a feeder, such a nagsman; his horses ollers looked grand. They did say that when war was declared the Count ordered him to poison his horses. It were a wicked lie; he did no such thing; he wired to Gibbs to see that they went to his friends. That war killed the poor gentleman—fair broke his heart it did. He were very kind to any prisoners of war, he was; as Dr. Whitling of Harborough will tell you. He was that nice you couldn't believe he weren't an Englishman—nor his nephey neither.

Once, years ago, down by Hoby Mill, Captain Smith and Mr. Tompkinson—him what broke his neck in the House of Commons Point-to-Point—leads their horses over the footbridge. When Lord Grey de

* He had then become Prince Kinsky.

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Wilton follows 'em, Mr. Moore of Appleby come a bit too close, and a fool of a parson can't wait till they were off the bridge, but must thunder after 'em. Of course, a footbridge won't stand three horses at once; so in go the whole b'iling. The fox hadn't crossed at all, but lay snug as a bug in a rug on the top of a pollard willow a-laughing at the fun; but he didn't laugh long; for Firr catch sight of him, and he never robbed another hen roost.

After Lord Manners there came Mr. Warner and Mr. William Paget of Loughborough. Wunnerful fond of huntin' all they Pagets are. I remember there were Sir Ernest what lives up by Sutton, and owned Cornsack—what won the Cambridgeshire—and his two sons, and Mr. Otho. He's a fine man to hounds; kept a pack of beagles for nigh fifty years. Ride anything he could; and tell a foxhunting run too, same as well as Captain Elmhirst of Brooksby used to; they were a pair—two of the few men as ever I knew'd as good with their pens as with their reins; Mr. Paget signed hisself Q, and the Captain he calls hisself Brooksby. And Miss Hylda, she's Mrs. Tilney now; no prettier lady ever had a crack, and does still.

And then there was Mr. Paget of Humberstone; he got killed riding in the Park, poor gentleman. What he wanted to go to Lunnon to ride for, God

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only knows. He'd be father of Major Paget, what hunts down on the Harborough side.

There was Mr. Edmund. He was a rare hound man, ever since he kept beagles up at Cambridge, and in Charnwood. You remember he dropped dead a year or two back out huntin', while Master of the Quorn. They ollers told him that if he went on huntin' he'd die; but lor! he didn't mind. He was a good Master, and the farmers thought a lot of him.

And now there's his son, Mr. Peter, who they says will be the next Master of the Quorn; and I'm sure we all hopes so.

Oh! the great days of the Quorn were when Lord Lonsdale had 'em. You never did see such turnouts as they had in them days. Melton had been very quiet for some time afore he took the hounds. Of course, there was ollers the old stickers. Lady Wilton of Egerton Lodge, she were the Queen of Melton; married Mr. Pryor, a grand old gentleman; hunted up to he was well over eighty, and nearly blind. Lor! how he loved the game. She were a Coventry. They were a grand foxhunting strain, them Coventries. I remember the old Earl. He used to come and have a day with us; and he and Lady Dolly used to stay at Egerton Lodge. She married a Scotsman—Sir Keith Fraser. She still hunts on the Harborough side, and generally on unbroken blood 'uns, out of



"HORSES"
(EARL OF LONSDALE)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1886

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training. Why, they do tell me the other day she was riding a four-year-old; puts him at some timber into the road; hits it all round, and all she says is, "Pity you did not come down, ye clumsy brute; that would have larned ye," and with that she rams him at a blind ditch the other side of the road, and away she goes.

Melton ollers has been a rare place for foreigners. They useter be mostly Scotsmen, but now they be all those Ammurricans. Not but what some of them be nice gentlemen; but they ain't like the old ones what were killed in the War. Just before the War there were a lot. There was Mr. Foxhall Keene; he was a good man. Mr. and Mrs. Sawbridge, the first foreigner to be Master of the Cottesmore; Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose Clarke; he was a wild 'un when he hunted from Sulby Grange. Mr. Payne of the Hall, him that was twice Master of the Pytchley, built it. He were very particular about who comed to the Hall, so built that house for the lady friends of his guests; and some say his own too. Mr. Clarke had it off Mr. Reggie Chaplin, the old Colonel's son. He was a ray of sunshine out hunting—cheeriest gentleman what ever threw a leg over a saddle; ollers a smile and a joke for everyone. That Mr. Clarke had some fine horses, but would ride anything. Very fond of point-to-pointing, and at the end of the season was

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generally very short of horses. He'd get a hireling, and try and go just as hard on it, poor brute. A very brave man, but prefers the Quorn fences to the Pytchley now. She won the National last year.

What of the ladies? They do be different now, to be sure. I can remember in Lord Lonsdale's days there was Lady Warwick, Lady Westmorland, and her sister, Lady Angela Forbes, and Lady Augusta Fane—she was a good 'un to go. They were a sight for sore eyes. You never saw four such beauties. Looked like ladies too, and not like second horsemen out of a sitivation, as most of 'em do nowadays.

I kin remember when a lot of 'em comed out in pink coats. Let me see, it would be somewhere about the year 1890. Mr. William Baird were Master of the Cottesmore. If I remember right there were six of 'em; Lady Sibyl and Lady Verena Lowther, Mrs. Garnett, what married Lord Winchester, Lady Hesketh, Mrs. Cecil Chaplin, and Mrs. Baird. They kept the secret well, and all turns up at a meet in pink coats; and very nice they looked too; it died out, but I do hear as how some of them what rides astride are going to do the same. You won't be able to tell t'other from which then.

But, talking about the ladies, I've seen some rum 'uns in my time. There was Lady Cardigan; she hated hunting—scared out of her life she was; so she

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used to stop her horses coming to the meet, and then drive about asking if anyone had seen 'em.

I remember on one occasion they had a rare bit of fun with them Forbes's. They would fly a flag over their house; so some of the young sparks they climbs up and takes it down, and makes them a mock presentation of it in front of Barkby Hall. Eh! but that country's fair ruined now. I remembers how they found the fox at the Holt, and ran him up to Syston, down past Thurmaston, to the back of the new Asylum as it was then, across by Humberstone Hall. I think they changed in the Round Spinney. On over the brook—I remember I was riding a horse of Captain Barclay's; he took a fall just where that new picture palace is now! They turned up left-handed to Scraftoft Hall—Captain Burns Hartopp was living there then—and on to Long Spinney. As nice a bit of country as any man would want to ride over; but look at it now! There ain't one field which hasn't got twenty houses in it; the only things as you could ride there would be electric trams, or could hunt but fleas in the chicken runs. But, as I say, those were the great days. You never see'd such turnouts as there was. His Lordship must have had a hundred grand thoroughbred chestnut horses, all with long tails and hog-manes; when they comes to the meet there was none of them stinking motee-cars, which nowadays

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spoils the sport and ruins the hounds' noses with their stench. Why, His Lordship would turn up in a carriage and four, with postillions; hounds would come with a carriage and four, and postillions; and, as like as not, Tom Firr, if he'd had a hard week, would come in a carriage and four, with postillions. The brightest yellor as ever you did see, them carriages were painted. Getting old in those days was Tom Firr, and huntin' six days a week is a tax on a man. He'd hunted the Quorn Hounds nigh thirty years by that time.

You could fill a book with the things His Lordship will tell you about what he's done. Very humorous is His Lordship. You never knows when he is having a joke on you; so there is some as thinks he's a liar; but lor! he's only having a lot of fun with ye, and seeing how much you'll believe.

He's rode over some awful places in his time. There was one, a double post and rail, in the corner of a field down by Great Dalby; over thirty feet it was. Someone asked His Lordship about it.

"Quite true," he says, "but the horse was no good afterwards. I squeezed him so hard I broke his ribs!"

Lord Lonsdale, when he first took the Quorn, had a very horsy appearance, and one day he lamed his horse and was making his way home, when he met a farmer, who called him "my man."

"Don't you know who I am?" says His Lordship.



LORD LONSDALE AT BURROUGH HILL RACES

From a painting by C. Bradley, 1898

Quorn

The farmer, seeing his cap an' side-whiskers, answered :

“ Oh yes, you are the new whip I expect.”

“ No, I'm the new Master,” laughed His Lordship.

“ Get along with you; you a Lord! You're too like a groom to kid me.”

The Belvilles—they lived at Stoughton—they were four of the brightest young limbs as ever you did see. They all of them be alive still, and three of them still huntin' down in the Harborough country; but we seldom sees them now on the Melton side, more's the pity. I wish I had a guinea in my pocket for all the fences they young gentlemen have broke. Mr. George hunted the Woodland Pytchley for years. He was the best horseman, but Captain Frank was a better man in a hunt.

Then I remember Captain Laycock, what married Lady Downshire. They were a rare couple to go. Beautiful horses they had too; no one better mounted. Her Ladyship lost a leg, but went just as well as her daughters—Lady Kathleen Rollo, and Miss Rosemary too—she's Mrs. Baillie now. You heard tell how she had the whole Belvoir field set a year or two back; nobody with 'em except her. When they finished she got the hounds, and brought 'em back. They be two nice young ladies; but lor! it be a pity they try to get themselves up like grooms. To see Lady Kathleen,

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you couldn't believe she has children bigger than herself, she looks that young.

It was just about that time they had the midnight steeplechase. That was a rare bit of fun. Lady Augusta Fane got it up. They was living at the Old Club then, and gave a great dinner before the event; but they made some mistake about the moon; so one of 'em come round to me and says, "Well, Dick, what shall we do?"

So I suggests we go down to the station and borrow some hurricane lamps—which I did—and they hangs them each side of the fences to mark 'em. All the gentlemen was wearing ladies' nightgowns. What with that, and the noise they made, they fair upset the Vicar, they did, and he were that angry that he denounced them from the pulpit next Sunday: hot and strong he gave it 'em.

They had arranged the course to finish through a gateway, but I points out that that were a very silly thing to do, as two of them riding through might get jammed in the dark. Mr. Otho Paget, he was lent one of Mr. Gordon Wilson's horses, and he always says as how he weren't told of the change. He was first through the gateway, and ought to have won; but the judges put Mr. Algy Burnaby first. Most of 'em what rode in it be dead now. There was Mr. Harry Rawlinson, what was Commander-in-Chief in India,

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Mr. Gordon Wilson, Count Zborowsky, what gave the cup for the race, Captain Warner, Mr. Charlie McNeill, Mr. Will Chaplin, and, if I remember right, Sir Ernest Paget's two sons.

The extraordinary thing about that there chase was that not one of 'em got hurt, and I never did hear but one of 'em had a fall; but then the fences were very small. They had a great supper at Coventry House, and they wanted me to come to it; but I thanked 'em very much, and said as how I knew me place, and would be as much at home as a cat at a swimming match.

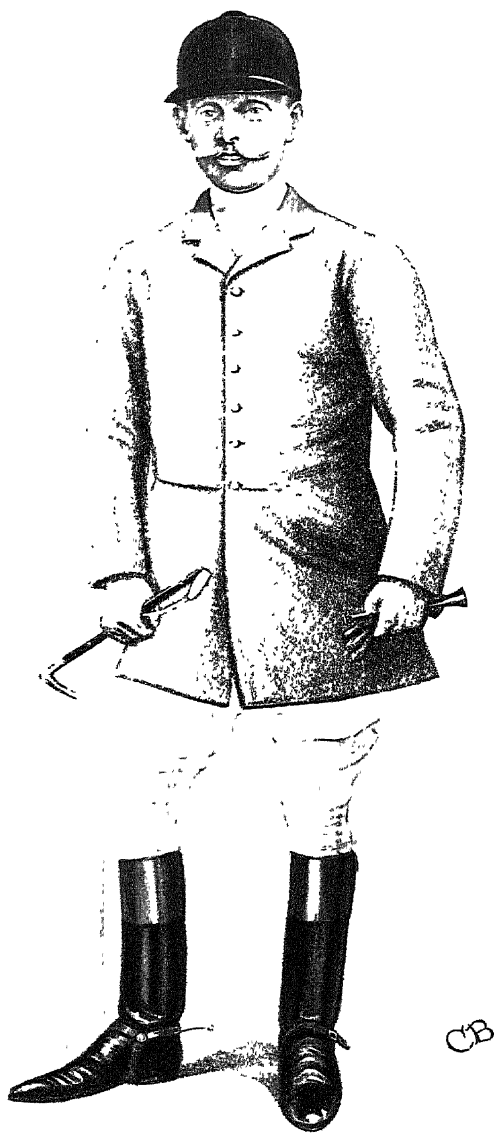
Mr. Alan Pennington, what married Miss Hartopp, he were there. They tell me that she's still alive. She must be a rare age. I reckon she be older than me. She must be nigh a hundred. Oh! a rare wag was Mr. Pennington—always had a good joke; never minded what he said to anybody. I remember he mounted his nephew, up from Eton, on a nice blood pony; being a bit fresh like, it lets out, and just catches a brewer fellow, what thought no end of hisself. He turns and curses the boy proper, calls him a little bounder, and asks him what he means by coming out and kicking him. That sort of riles Mr. Pennington, who was just behind; so he calls out:

“You shut up; why shouldn't a rich brewer be kicked as well as anybody else?”

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Then there was Lord Castlereagh—he married Squire Chaplin's daughter. They don't breed men like the Squire nowadays. Lor! what a man he were! There be two things which ruins men, one be Racing, and the other Politics. If the old Squire had left them two things alone, he might well be hunting yet. I never did see a heavyweight what could gallop as he did. He never liked his horses to rise up high at their fences, but just relied on his weight to crash through. I don't think I ever did see a man what knew more about hounds and hunting than Squire Chaplin. He was a great friend of Lord Lonsdale, who thought no end of him; and so I believe did everyone else. Lord Castle-reagh, you seldom see him out nowadays. Never see'd a neater rider; sits his horse a picture. He be Minister for Edication or some'at. Sir Keith Fraser, there's another; got into Parliament, and now they tells me he never goes out hunting.

It's terrible the things politics 'll make people do. My old father used to tell a story of how one o' the Mr. Manners's, who'd bought Grantham, quarrelled with the Duke, because he wouldner let him name the man what was to sit in Parliament for it. He were that angry he warned off the Duke's hounds, and even went so far as to make a lot o' his tenants take out summonses against the Duke for trespassing. Quite spoilt hunting, it did, till they made it up again.



"LONG BURNS"
(CAPTAIN T. BURNS-HARTOPP)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1900

Quorn

Captain and Mrs. Hartopp of Dalby and their two daughters, it be a tail-twister of a hunt they don't see the end of. Captain Burns Hartopp is getting a bit on; he were a rare man to hounds. I'll tell you a good story about him. He ollers went into Leicester Repository when he was short of a horse, and picked up anything that looked all right at twenty or thirty quid. One day he sees a horse there, "the property of a gentleman"; looked a rare sort; so he buys it for twenty-five quid; takes him out on the Monday, and finds he's better than he looks. A real five hundred guinea sort it were, and the Captain has them all pounded. Going home he's riding with Sir Ernest Cassel, the millionaire banker from Lunnon. He says to the Captain,

"That's a rare sort of horse you're on; it's just the kind I really want."

"Well," the Captain says, "if you really like him, you can have him. Throw your leg over him and try him," which Sir Ernest does. Well, I suppose the Captain opens his mouth wide enough; but, anyhow, Sir Ernest buys the horse and takes it home; but as soon as his groom sees it he says :

"Lor! lummy, Sir, whatever have you been and gone and done? Why, if that's not the wery horse as you sent up to the Leicester Repository, he being so wery wicious in the yard that he put me down."

I 'aven't told you everything about the Major. They

Rum 'uns to Follow

be a rare foxhunting family them Burnabys. Ever since there's been foxhunting in Leicestershire, or a bit of mischief, there's been a Burnaby in it. They tells a story about his reverence, the Major's uncle. He was a good man to hounds. One day he applies to the Bishop of Peterborough, Magee, or some such name like that, for a stall, whatever that may be, in Peterborough Cathedral; but the Bishop, who was fond of a day's hunting at times hisself, so they tells me, says as how he was sorry, but he couldn't give him a stall at Peterborough, as he thought a box at Melton were more in his line. The Rev. Burnaby he was very took down by that, because the story got round, and all the gentlemen would keep a-chipping of him. Then there be Mrs. Burnaby. What a nice lady, and what a help to the Hunt when the Major was Master.

It was during His Lordship's time as they brought in capping, and Mr. Otho Paget was asked to do it. In those days, you may remember, gentlemen ollers carried golden sovereigns with 'em. They met at Quenby, a lot of strangers out: it must have been after a Yeomanry Ball or summat; but anyhow Mr. Otho he took a toss into a ditch, and they do say as how a couple of labourers had to hold him by his feet for an hour and a half, while he was fishing for the gold out of that there ditch. They christened the place Klondyke.

If I once started talking about that there Mr. Otho,



" A CRIMEAN HERO "
(MAJOR-GEN. EDWYN S. BURNABY)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1883

Quorn

lor! I could fill a book about the things he's done. He's always had a pack of beagles, ever since I can remember. Beautiful little creatures they are, and with such a cry to 'em; it fair warms the cockles of your heart to hear 'em. They do a lot of good in a foxhunting country, do beagles. You see, so many of the foxes, if it is at all dry like, will lie out in these big hedgerows, and offen get up just towards the end of the Hunt, and spoil it for the huntsman; or you may be chasing over the country for hours, and draw all your coverts blank; but if you have a pack of beagles they drives all the foxes out of the hedgerows, back into the coverts, where they belong and oughter be.

I remember a Miss Tennant took a fall near Klondyke; she wasn't what you may call a regular, but come down pretty offen. She was never the first-class—too full of talk ever to be a real foxhunter. Not like Mrs. Tennant what lives over at Sutton Bonington. She and the Colonel they're a pair. Real love of the game they have.

About the coverts you want to know? They don't seem to have altered much since my day, when you look round the Quorn. From the Coplow and Botany Bay, the best line's to the Prince of Wales's Covert, and on to Barkby Holt; or from the Holt to Ashby Pastures, Cream Gorse, or Mundy's.

The Quorn have some rather nice country out on the

Rum 'uns to Follow

Forest side; but the Melton gentlemen have never seemed to like it. A good wild country it is, where you can see real foxhunting. It's that country that makes the Quorn Hounds such a good lot as they are.

They ollers reckon to have a good run with the Cottesmore from Ranksborough Gorse, and it's a nice line across through Priors Coppice and into their woodland country, by Wardley. There's a fine place for holding foxes—and horses' shoes too! But I don't know what the Cottesmore would do if it wasn't for they woodlands. They belongs to Mr. Finch: Sir Arthur Fludyer left them him. His father's a fine old gentleman; he must be very nigh a hundred; still comes out hunting. Mr. Jimmy—him what used to be the Secretary of the Cottesmore—nothing gives him more pleasure than to see a brace of foxes going away from Wardley Wood, with the hounds chasing another half-dozen round it—just like his old uncle, Sir Arthur Fludyer. I'll tell you about him some time.

Then they reckon that Melton Spinney, Holwell Mouth, and Colston Bassett are about the pick of the Belvoir country. Old Colonel Paynter, the father of the General, Sir Hugh Cholmeley of Easton, Sir Charles Welby, Mr. Pearson Gregory, and Sir Thomas Whichcote, they were the backbone of the Belvoir country afore and after the old Duke gave them up. Old Colonel Paynter—the Smiler, they used to call



" OTHO "

(J. OTHO PAGET)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1902

Quorn

him—he were a dandy; a fine man in a point-to-point—same as his son is—and a first-class man to hounds into the bargain. There's no more popular pair than the General and his lady; and now they've got a son, I expect he'll follow in his father's footsteps.

Afore the War Captain Paynter, Mr. George Drummond, and Captain George Powell were known as the Three Mad Georges.

Folks can say what they like, but there was a rare lot of farmers hunting with the Quorn in the nineties. There's old David Ward of Bescaby; he was the leader of 'em in his day; and then there were Mr. Simpkin and Mr. James at Hoby. I offen reckon Hoby is one of the nicest lines in the country: run across to Queniborough, and on to Beeby, where Tom Nuttall used to live. He was a good man to hounds in his day.

But them Belvoir farmers, they seemed to be the best. There was a lot of them. There would be that John Northern; he took some beating. One of the best men I ever knowed was Mr. Sam Hames, the dealer—the quietest and silkiest hands and tongue as you did ever see. I expect he sold more good animals up in the Quorn country than any man. And then there was Captain Steeds—he had Tom Hobbs with him as rough-rider—a beautiful horseman Tom were. The Captain didn't forget to open his mouth wide

Rum 'uns to Follow

though, if he'd got anything a bit extra. But of all high-class horses, John Henry Stokes, of Harborough way, was the man who would seem to collect most; but, sure, the old gentleman, he wouldn't look at you under about three hundred guineas; but then he ollers fitted the right horse to the right man. Now that makes a lot of difference in keeping a good name—to know your horse and know your man. Why, one horse as one gentleman gets along with ain't no manner of use to another one, and then wisey worser.

What about the best men I've seen?

Now, if you take Masters, they have such an advantage, ollers being given way to at gates and gaps, that it's hard to know how good they'd be on the same terms like.

The hardest man I ever did see was Mr. Teddy Brooks. With the Quorn nothing stopped him—not even wire. Sat up his horse's neck he did; but he killed a powerful lot of horses. Major Johnny McKie were quite a different sort; a rum 'un to follow; Captain Tony Parker was the best man I ever saw on a bad horse; Lord Annaly, the prettiest horseman; for heavyweights, Lord Lonsdale, Sir Albert Muntz, Major T. Jameson of Cottesbrooke, Sir Charles and Colonel Jack Lowther, and Captain Jock Campbell are about the best in my time. The Captain never had the cattle the other five rode; but I reckon he's the

Quorn

best horseman. Lord Spencer, Captain Bay Middleton, Captain Doggie Smith, Mr. Pat Nickalls, Captain Boyce, General Paynter, Mr. Drummond, Count Kinsky, the Prince, Captain Elmhirst, Major Burnaby, are well among the top sawyers of any time. Mr. Edmonstone goes as well with his own hounds as anyone, as did Mr. Tailby. Of the American gentlemen, Mr. Foxhall Keene and Mr. Ambrose Clarke lasted as long as any, but was ollers wery wild. Mr. Mills of Bosworth lasted better than any man I ever knewed; went hard till he was over eighty, he did; and Mr. Willie Wroughton.

I ought to mention Captain Jack Harrison, Major Jim Sherrard and Captain De Pret. Lor! I almost forgot Captain Hubbersty; he was as good when he went down to the Pytchley as he is up here. I would put him as real best of any I ever rode with, and on any horse too; but I must have forgotten a lot just as good, but haven't stayed long, like the Weedon officers. I've seen hundreds come up here, and go like smoke; but what old Will Goodall used to say was, "Don't worrit; they'll soon come back to us." They say that not one man in twenty keeps his nerve for three years in the Pytchley country. Anyone I've told of will have had to have hunted here for ten or more, and have been ollers in front. The test is after they've had a few proper downers, and hurt 'emselves or their horse

Rum 'uns to Follow

really bad, and as soon as they can sit a saddle to be at it again in front.

I needn't mention the Hunt servants; if they don't go they don't stop up here; nor the rough-riders. It's our living, same as it is the dealers'; but a lot of the dealers don't go, but prefers to pay someone else to.

Who's hunting with the Quorn now? It's hard to say; they changes so fast. There be Lord and Lady Wodehouse of Thorpe Satchville way. I never seen a harder man than His Lordship on a horse. He could squeeze and bang them along, and no mistake.

Then there be Captain Arnott and Mr. Tommy Graves and Mr. Charlie Clarke—him what talks such a lot. Lor! if hounds could run as fast as his tongue, they'd kill a rare lot of foxes.

Captain Sam Aston has hunted from Melton a number of years, and Sir Raymond Greene of Burrough; he's had enough sense to come out of Parliament and go hunting.

Lord Furness, he be up at Burrough, but he don't seem somehow to care for hunting. Suppose it is seeing as how he's not been bred to it.

Then there be Miss Leigh. Lor! it would have made you laugh when she first came down here. Everybody who had a horse was round her, like flies round a honey-pot, trying to stick it into her at twice or three times its value. She were a Lancashire lass,

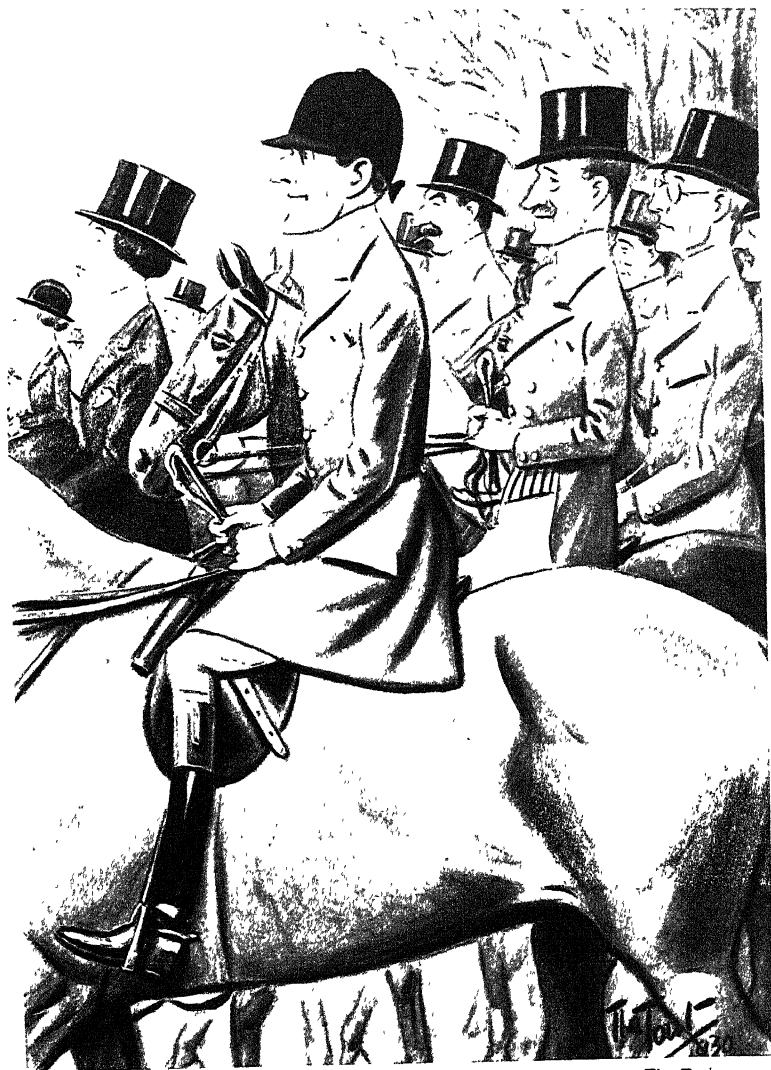
Quorn

she were; and I can mention them as went away disappointed.

The ladies what went best? Now, Sir, that b'ain't fair! I don't mind what I says about the men; but the ladies, not I. My life would ne'er be worth a minute's purchase. I'd want a regiment of cavalry, like Lord Spencer had in Ireland, that I would, to look arter me.

What! Is it twelve o'clock already? What a lot you have talk'd to me, to be sure! Show you round the Fernie country—same as Dick Christian did the Druid? Certainly, sir; I be proud to, any day you name.

Two
Fernie Country



FERNIE FOLLOWERS

(FREDA CROMWELL, DOROTHY LLOYD, WARDY GILLILAN, CHARLIE EDMONSTONE, GUY PAGET, BILL MASSEY, ADAM LEVY, JOHN ALEXANDER and NEDDY DE TRAFFORD)

The Tatler, 1930

II — Fernie Country

GOOD-MORNING, Sir; I thought I'd better meet you here at Welford Station, as it'll make a good round. I see you've got one o' them beastly motee-cars instead of a nice horse and trap. Suppose one can't help it these days. You'll be asking me to go in an airyplane next. In fact, I shouldn't have been surprised if I'd see'd you coming down at Cote Hill over there in one.

This is Highfield we're passing now. That's where old Mr. Trueman Mills used to live. He were a tremendous hard man to hounds. I've told you about him before.

Mr. Mills was a little gentleman with a white beard; rode very short, and used to fall like a ball; never hurt hisself. He had a famous grey horse, what they wrote a poem about, called "The Little Grey Man on his Old Grey Horse." He was in the great Waterloo run.

He was a rum stick; very rich he was; left over seven millions o' money, but was as tight as a tinker's tyke. One day he buys a load of carrots off one of his own tenants, and haggles with him over half a crown for

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half an hour in the rain; but, cold as it was, he wouldn't part with the half-dollar, till the man went into the house to get the shilling change. You may be sure he were a mighty long time a-finding that shilling. When there was a cap for the Hunt Servants or Farmers' Benevolent, he used to come late to the meet; but they got wise on him, so told off a farmer specially to watch out for him; but he could only get half a crown, and only then when he had given him sixpence change for a florin and a bob. He were the only man what rode in a top-hat what didn't give gold.

He turned an old woman off his Norfolk estate because her donkey brayed at his horse and frightened it. Yet he'd give thousands secretly to hospitals, and to anyone he knew who had fallen on evil days. He made his sons pay for the keep of their horses, when they came to stay with him, to the last penny. They were a fine two couple, the old man, Mr. Harry, Mr. Charlie, and Mr. Jack; but the old man always had the best of them, and kept his nerve right up to the end—so did his daughter, Mrs. Wallace, of West Haddon.

Mr. Charlie had the Woodland for a season after Mr. Wroughton. He married Mrs. McDougal, as she is now, one of the prettiest ladies what ever came out hunting, and a beautiful horsewoman.

Fernie Country

She and Captain McDougal came there next. He tried training horses; but you can't train on clay, it's too hard, or it's too soft, and breaks 'em down something chronic. The Captain's as game a man as ever looked between a horse's ears, and a grand horseman. Such a dandy too! They do tell me it takes three men to make his boots. Lost his foot in a railway accident. He brings out that young Lord from the Cottesmore. What's his name? His Grand-dad had the Quorn. Don't matter: he oillers reminds me of Sir Gilbert's famous hound, Belvoir Wallaby, he's that good-looking.

Now Mr. Edmonstone lives there. He's Master. A very amusing gentleman, and rides very short. When hounds are running he very seldom has anyone in front of him. Most popular Master with the farmers the Fernie's ever had—takes no end of trouble with 'em. Mrs. Edmonstone hunts too—one of the nicest ladies that I ever met in all my life, and a very pretty little horseman she is too.

Now we're going through Bosworth. This belongs to Mr. Petre. He doesn't hunt now, but his daughter do. A nice place Bosworth Hall.

Away on our left there, you see the Laughton Hills. They stretch for about three miles, and are the great fox stronghold of the Fernie country. I don't think I ever remembers them being drawn blank. You see

Rum 'uns to Follow

that house among the trees? That belongs to Mr. Burton. He's a very keen fox preserver. I remember when Lord Stalbridge was Master, he was cubbing there, and they ran a cub to ground, and dug him out and killed him; and then there was another one in the earth, which His Lordship wanted to have out too; but Mr. Burton wouldn't stand for it nohow. Had a real stand-up row with His Lordship. He said as how he didn't keep foxes all the summer, just to be pulled out of their holes and killed; he kept 'em to show sport; and neither him nor his sons go hunting neither. That's the kind of farmers they has down there. At the far end young Mr. Paget lives; made hisself a nice place out of one of his father's farms. Very hard young gentleman, but's took some dreadful falls; nearly killed hisself last year, he did. Mr. and Mrs. Farquhar and their two sons hunted from there last season. He were learned that Eytalian seat, but it seems to suit him.

Over there on the right is Hothorpe. That's actually in the Pytchley country. Belongs to Mr. de Trafford. Captain Alexander, the other Master of the Fernie, lives there. He's hunted here a long time. A fine judge of horses, and a good houndsman, which you don't often find in a sailor. In fact, him and Admiral Beatty are the two best sailors I ever see'd out hunting; though Lord Borodale's pretty useful, and so's Mr.

Fernie Country

Menzies. Then there was Admiral Cowan. He was a very small gentleman, but one of the bravest men I ever did see; but terrible hard on his horses.

That was Theddingworth you just passed through.

You see all those white-faced Herefords? They belongs to Mr. Ashton, one of Major Paget's tenants, what lives at Lubenham. His father was a grand old gentleman—one of the old sort of yeoman farmer. He were a wunnerful man: knew the history of every field between here and Melton, and who owned and farmed it for the last hundred years. Pity he's dead; he could have told you a rare lot of stories.

Now we be coming to Papillon, where Captain Frank Belville is. I reckon he's hunted longer with Mr. Fernie's than any man who goes out; there, I mustn't forget Mr. Webster what lives at Theddingworth. You don't see many of his sort about nowadays.

Pamps Covert on the right—a wery nice little covert it is too; only it's got too much elder in it. Pamps Hall; that's haunted. There's a story that one of the Papillons married a foreign lady. She was carrying on with some other foreigner. He found it out by her dropping her shoe. Well, some says he killed her, and that disaster would happen to the house if ever her shoes were taken out of it; and they are kept in a safe built in the wall to this day. When the house was re-

Rum 'uns to Follow

built, they was taken out, and that very day the house was struck by lightning.

That place on the right is Thorpe Lubenham. Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher live there. She were the daughter of Grand Duke Michael. I reckon Sir Harold has the finest stud of horses of anyone in England. Arthur Jones is his rough-rider; he's a wunnerful man on a horse; used to ride for Mr. Stokes. He never seemed to mind what he got up on: didn't seem to make no difference. He'd take a horse off the train, straight from Ireland, and ride it slap up at the top with a hunt. Never seemed to hurt hisself on any raw thing; but, poor fellow, he went and broke his leg on one of Sir Harold's best horses. I'm glad to say he's all right again, and going as strong as ever.

Sir Harold has a lot of people to stay at Lubenham for hunting, and generally mounts them. Mr. Desmond Millar and Mr. Reggie Wynn are two of the best as comes. That house on the corner, what good men I remember there! Mr. and Mrs. Holland, Lord Ludlow, Major and Mrs. Massey, Lord Ebury. That next house was Lady Astor's, and then Mrs. Peabody, and Sir Frederick and Lady Anstruther, and Miss Leatham—always up in front; knows the game. Colonel Harry Schofield, what won the V.C. at South Africa, next to Lord Annaly was the prettiest

Fernie Country

sight I ever see'd on a horse; fair picture he was, and turned out just right, from his hat guard to his spurs; lived at Foxton.

We'll turn down here, and I'll show you a stable door the like of which, I'll lay a dollar, you've never seen. Afore my time, Mr. Cherry Angel lived there; then Mr. Harry Mills, afore he went to Langton. After him Captain Alexander had it for some years. It's empty now.

Look at that. See them eight horse-shoes?

Bridegroom, winner of—

1. First Grand National Hunt Steeplechase.
4 miles. 18/4/1860. Harborough.
2. Liverpool Autumn Steeplechase. 12/11/1862.
10 st. 4 lbs. 3 miles. 6 ran.
3. Liverpool Hunt Club Steeplechase. 10/5/1862.
12 st. 4 miles. 9 ran.
4. Farndon Hill Steeplechase. 8/4/1861. 12 st.
3 miles. 4 ran.
5. Weatherby Steeplechase Cup. 13 st. 5 ran.
6. Liverpool Hunt Club Steeplechase. 10/4/1863.
12 st. 5 ran.

Alcibiades, winner of—

7. Grand National Steeplechase, Liverpool.
14/3/1865. 11 st. 4 lbs. 23 ran.

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Queensferry, winner of—

8. Grand National Hunt Steeplechase. Market Harborough. 18/5/1861. 12 st. 7 ran.

He won a lot of races. He had a training gallop made up just like the Liverpool Grand National. Mr. Burton of Daventry used to ride for him. He's grandfather to Colonel Thornton of Brockhall. He* only died in 1907, and Charlie Cornell was his groom. He lies buried in the churchyard, and Alcibiades, his great favourite, not ten yards away on the other side of the fence.

Bridegroom had a great record. He was 6th, 4th and 2nd in the Grand National in '60, '61, '62.

At one time a rare lot of people used to live round here, and hunt from Harborough. Captain and Mrs. Bentley lived there, after Arthingworth was burnt down. Miss Naylor—Mrs. Straker as is now—she hunted from Harborough after old Squire Naylor died. Then, up on the hill, for many years there was Mr. Straker, Count and Countess Wrangle—he was Swedish Ambassador—and the two Captain Stephens of the Guards, what were killed in the War.

Sir Humphrey de Trafford used to live at Hillcrest, at the top of the town. He was a very kind gentleman. Had £90,000 a year, and blowed the lot, and

* Mr. Burton.

Fernie Country

had nought to show for it—gave it away with both hands to any wastrel that imposed on him. They set him proper at Heydock. He'd had a bad week, and told some people to back a certainty next day, when he weren't there, to win him £5,000, or something like that. They run it up to about 33 to 1 on, and saw to it it didn't win. He were a fine judge of a horse, and very knowledgeable too. A crying shame it were to rob and ruin such a gentleman.

A Count Hochberg hunted here for many years, a Bosche he was; the only man I ever see ride on a lady's saddle. They said he was that Kaiser's head spy; and a gentleman we won't name has cursed hisself that he took a fall one day as he crossed him, to avoid jumping on him.

There was Mr. Hugh Owen, the Jockey Club Starter; he broke his neck. And Mrs. Meekin what married Mr. Johnston, Master of the Hursley. She was mother of that poor Lady Apsly what broke her back. Dear little lady she is too; game as a pebble; still hunts on wheels. Mrs. Mason, daughter of Mrs. Faber, and her two boys, hunted from Harborough. They were a good trio, till the poor lady broke her neck out by Glenn six year back. She was one of the boldest women I ever remember. The Eadys, Kenneth and Toller, the brewers, were as good heavyweights as I remember; on cheap horses too; but, my word,

Rum 'uns to Follow

they went! Kenneth died about three year back. Luff, luff, I do be getting depressing; you'll begin to think hunting dangerous.

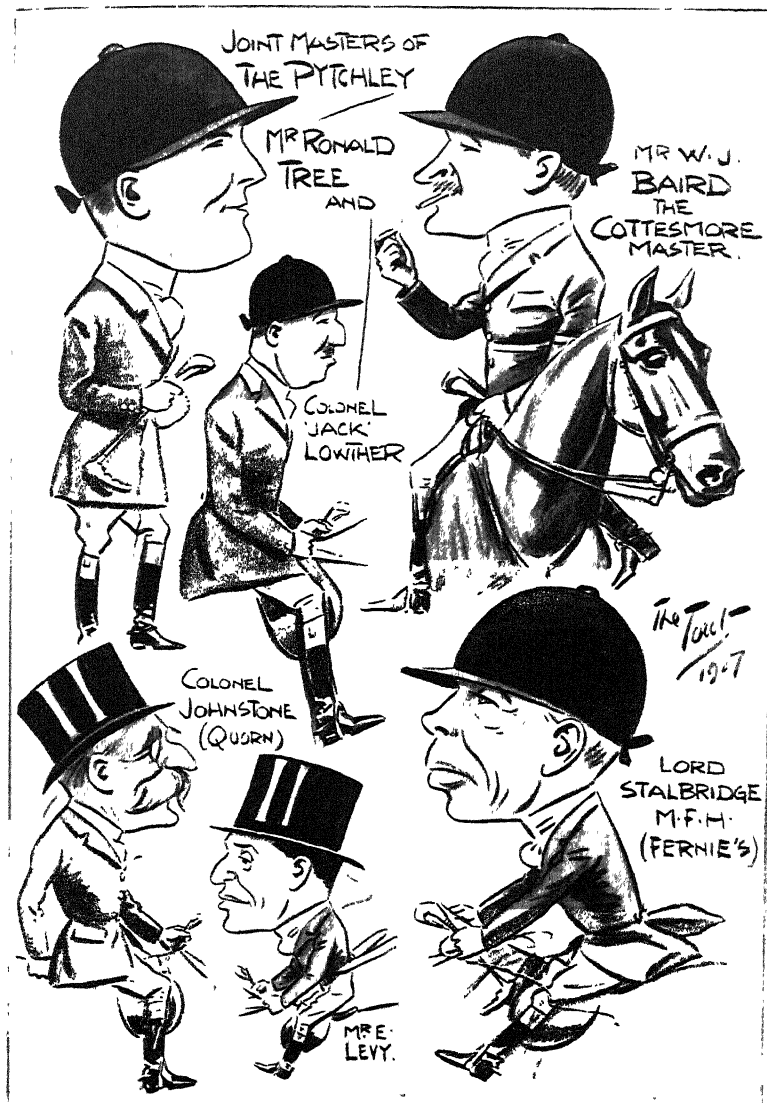
That house on the left is where Lawyer Douglass lives. His father was one of the old sort. He was Secretary of the Fernie for many years, until he fell out with Lord Churchill over summat. I've been told as he once rode a steeplechase with another heavy-weight, both of them over 60 years of age and 18 stone—Oldacre of Clipston, what planted John and Jane Ball's Peatling Coverts. Douglass won, owing to the other's horse refusing the brook two fields from home.

If I was to tell you of all the people who've hunted here, I should fill a whole book, that I would.

Mr. and Mrs. Vigors are living there. They both go well, and they has two of the best boys you ever did see to hounds; regular little limbs of Satan them be, and Mr. Vigors always mounts 'em on his big horses, and, my word, they do go!

On the right is where Mr. Stokes lives—Mr. Ernest that is. His father used to live at the house just by there; but I told you about him before. He were a delightful old gentleman. Mr. Ernest sold his yard to the Hunt, when Mrs. Fernie gave up the hounds, and they built the new kennels, which you see on the right.

Lord Stalbridge used to live there hisself, and now



A MIXED BAG FROM LEICESTERSHIRE

(RONALD TREE, JAMES BAIRD, JACK LOWTHER, BRUCE JOHNSTONE
ADAM LEVY, HUGH STALBRIDGE)

The Bystander, 1927

Fernie Country

Captain Massey does—him that's Secretary of the Hunt. I reckon he's about the best Hunt Secretary in England. Real cheery hard man is Bill Massey! He takes a rare lot of getting over, and seems to scent out a bogus claim a mile off.

Major Gillilan lives up on the hill. Him and both his sons have hunted here for a long time.

Yes, Sir, that country on your right is a wunnerful bit of country. That's Welland Valley; I reckon it's the finest grazing ground in the whole of England, looking right away there to where Slawston Windmill used to be. That was a great landmark for many years. Mrs. Fernie bought it and repaired it; but it was struck by lightning and destroyed about five years ago. It's an extraordinary thing that in all my time I've only known hounds run across this valley about three times. You see, there's the two railways, the river, the canal, and a couple of main roads, between any coverts; and that ain't much encouragement for a fox to cross it.

Just before the War they run across it, and leaves the whole field. A gentleman, what had to get home early, was hacking home, when he hears the hounds on his right running his way; so off he goes. A labourer tells him they be gone five minutes, and not a soul with 'em; so he goes on, and finds them at Gumley Wood, marking to ground, so tell the keeper

Rum 'uns to Follow

to look after them, and send a boy on a bike back towards Langton to look for the huntsman. Next day he was very amused to be told he has missed a great run, and what a lot of people thought they had been with hounds.

You'd be surprised how many people, if they can see one pink coat in front of them, really and truly believes they have been with hounds all the day, when they haven't seen a hound since the meet.

It's because of this valley that people seem to think that the Fernie country's full of wire. You see, the railway to Melton and Oakham runs down it; and gentlemen looking out of the carriage windows sees nothing but wire; so they says the whole of the Fernie country is full of it; but I reckon that there's no country in England, what's a grass country, what's freer of wire than the Fernie country is to-day.

Mr. Edmonstone has taken a rare lot of trouble with the farmers to get wire down. In fact, he's made the Saturday country, on our right, rideable for the first time in history. You see, it's grazing country; and, before the days of barbed wire, all the fences were protected with double oxers, and they was almost as bad as the wire. In fact, it was about that bit of country Mr. Assheton Smith said there were few fences he couldn't get over with a fall; but I reckon, if he came back here to-day, he'd find some he

Fernie Country

couldn't. Mr. Edmonstone has had jumping places made in 'em, and it's becoming wery popular, and they had good sport there last season. The foxes seem to appreciate all the trouble what's been taken for 'em. They had a good hunt this year in the Cubbing, and, blow me! if the fox didn't run from one of them jumping places to the other, and the gentlemen, they was teasing of the Master, and asking him how he'd managed to train the fox to run like that.

This is Langton Caldwell just in front of us. This is a hard bit of country to cross. The fences are very strong, and the Stonton Brook at the bottom is only jumpable in a few places. These four villages round here are called the Langtons—some of the highest ground, barring the Forest, in Leicestershire. You see that old square tower? That's Church Langton. You can see it for miles all round in every direction. A regular landmark it is. Mr. Harry Mills lives there, as I told you afore. He's a great supporter of the Hunt, just like his old father. Captain Warner lived there before, and Mr. Stirling Crawford afore that—him what married the Duchess of Montrose instead of Fred Archer the jockey. I've see'd him out with the Quorn with the Duke of Portland. The Duke nearly took the Quorn once.

This little house on the left is where Mr. Stanley Hayr lived. He were one of the younger generation

Rum 'uns to Follow

of farmers; a hard rider to hounds, and certainly the best farmer in a point-to-point for miles around.

I reckon you'd like to run through the best of the Thursday country, and have a look at the coverts there.

Yes, Sir, this estate is beautifully kept up. You see, Captain Warner, who was Master of the Quorn, he had it before Mr. Mills. One of the few places where you still find double oxers instead of wire; and it takes a rare good horse to get straight across.

Away on the left is Gumley Wood. That's in the Monday country; we'll come back that way.

This is Tur Langton, and I reckon that's the ugliest church in the whole of England.

Away among the trees there is Mr. William Hayr's. He's a good man to hounds—same as his wife and daughters are—and he's probably one of the best farmers in England. Poor fellow, he lost his son—a real good foxhunter he were, too—a-riding of a danged motee-bike.

Away on the left is Carlton Clump; that's another landmark, and a rare difficult place to stop—fair honeycombed with rabbit and badger holes. Mr. Jack Belville lives just by there at Kibworth Hall, where old Colonel Chaplin, what got a V.C. in the Indian Mutiny, used to be. He used to hunt four-year-olds when he was eighty. A beautiful horseman, and a rare

Fernie Country

trial he was to Mr. Tailby when he had the hounds. He's the father of Mr. Reggie, what lived at Park House, Harborough, where Mr. Nigel Baring is.

We'll stop here a minute and have a look round. That's Sheepthorns to the left, as they now calls it. It ought to be Sheep Horns. Now turn to the right, and there's a panorama for you. The Caudles and Stonton Wood; then away on the skyline, a bit further on, that would be Glooston. All that land belongs to Mr. Brudenell of Deene. He's a one. Didn't hunt till he was over forty; never'd sat on a horse—and he ain't built for riding. Used to wear a cut-away coat and a hunt cap; wery queer. He went surprisingly well, seeing how little he had rode. He set a great store by Arthur Thatcher, he did. He were wery fond of a bit of fun, and some of the gentlemen used to try and pull his leg; but for the most part he were a-pulling theirs, and they didn't know it till afterwards. He was a bit deaf, but heard a lot more than he was supposed to very often.

He comed into Lord Cardigan's property. I once saw His Lordship jump over two children getting through some rails. He'd no consideration for anyone, but a first-class 'un to hounds. He were the man what led the charge at Balaclava; they has a song about it in these parts.

There was a grand litter of foxes there—just after

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the Boer War it was; they used to run out by Hallaton into the Cottesmore country over to Owston and Wardley Wood. A-talking of Wardley Wood reminds me o' old Sir Arthur Fludyer I mentioned afore.

When Mr. Sawbridge took the Cottesmore, one o' the ladies says to him: "There are several things you must remember, but by far the most important, if you are to get on, is that Wardley Wood belongs to Sir Arthur Fludyer, and every fox in it counts for three."

He fair loved his foxes; nothing gived him more pleasure than to see a dozen cross the ride. He hated 'em to be killed cubbing too.

Once when Gillson killed a cub, he say:

"Oh! you've killed that beautiful cub. I wouldn't have had him killed for five pounds."

"But, Sir," said Gillson, "I killed him for nothing."

He were a great man to swear. A lady once knocked him over, and I thought he'd 'a' burst afore she rode off and he could express hisself.

They once didn't find a fox in Wardley Wood. It ain't popular with the hard riders; it's big and deep, and you can spend half a day there. One of that kind see a fox back, but said nothing at the time, hoping they'd leave the wood.

Sir Arthur he heard of it, and fair rounds on him:

Fernie Country

“Sir, you saw a fox in Wardley Wood, and didn’t holloa him. If I were God, Sir, I’d strike you dumb, Sir—yes, dumb for ever.”

He had a pet fox what lived in a tree; so he rides up to see if he were there, very quiet like, so as not to disturb him till the hounds were close; he puts up his hat. Mr. Flower, what lived at Skeffington Vale, gallops up, and frightened off the fox.

What Sir Arthur said to him would ‘a’ fired a haystack.

Sir Arthur were not what you’d call a hard rider, and he didn’t see much o’ that hunt; but he met them coming back after killing him, and set about Mr. Flower again.

“All right, Arthur,” he says, “you can find a fox, but not hunt him.”

He had a old groom, what used to drive Her Ladyship after hounds. Whenever they see hounds running, he says:

“There they are, me Lady; there they are, and Sir Arthur a-leading ‘em over the big double.”

There you see Keythorpe Hall on the sky-line, where Mr. Fernie used to live—away on the right. Mr. Fernie took the hounds after Sir Bache Cunard gave ‘em up, and hunted the country for thirty-three years. He was always a very delicate gentleman; his doctor told him he must winter abroad, or he’d certainly die.

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He asked him how long he would live, if he did winter abroad. The doctor told him five years, and if he didn't go abroad he might die any time if he got a chill; but couldn't possibly live for three years, if he live in England. He says :

"I prefer to live for three years in England, instead of five abroad," and with that he takes the hounds; and it were three and thirty years before he died. If that don't prove that foxhunting is healthy, I don't know what does. The last two or three years the poor gentleman never came out with the hounds, except in his motee-car; but the huntsman had to tell him every night how each hound had done. There never was a man who was more devoted to hounds than Mr. Fernie. He fair spoilt the country, he was that generous. He got took in regular, he did.

When he died, I reckon they was the best pack of hounds, both for work and looks, in the whole of England. Spent, they say, £10,000 a year on the Hunt. Arthur Thatcher was his huntsman for nearly twenty years—the cheeriest man that ever blew a hunting horn. A wunnerful hound man. He could make a hunt out of anything. Always keen to show sport. I remember the first day the Prince of Wales ever came out with these hounds; there wasn't one scrap of scent. They met at Skeffington, and they drew the whole of the Thursday country in one day, and a bit of the

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Saturday too. The moment the hounds checked, Arthur see'd that they could do no good, so he just gives one tootle on his horn, and jumps a very big place, and away he goes to the next covert. Dan Gibbs and Clarence Johnson were his Whips at that time, and as good a pair as any huntsman ever had. Stopped with him for years, they did. One of 'em slips on, and holloas away a fresh fox, and off goes Arthur, and I don't suppose there was half a dozen gentlemen out that day who didn't think they'd been hunting the same fox, without a check. Beautifully mounted they were. I reckon Mr. Fernie never gave less than £250 for any horse.

Arthur was the quickest man in a wood I ever did see. As soon as the fox was roused, he'd cheer his hounds, and blow his horn, and gallop after him, till he fair scared him out of the wood into the open. Never gave him a second's rest.

When Mrs. Fernie gived up, Lord Stalbridge came—he hunting his hounds, he didn't want a huntsman; everyone wanted to mount Arthur; but he says to them :

“Thank you very much; but I've always had very good Masters, who always mounted me on the living best, and I can't ride any others. I never could understand how half you gentlemen ever got over the country on the horses you do.”

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He was very loyal to Lord Stalbridge; always tried to help him, when he was asked; but never put himself forward at all, nor would he ever join in any criticism of him:

“It’s very easy to cast hounds after the huntsman has failed,” he used to say.

The first time Tom Firr see’d him, he was hunting the Cottesmore for Mr. Hanbury from Berry Gorse by Ranksborough to Braunston. He exclaims:

“He’s an ornament to his profession.” Tom was very generous in his praise of other huntsmen, but only when they deserved it.

Stop a bit here by Shangton Holt.

I remember once a fox, in Sir Bache’s time; he’d given us a good hunt out by Langton, then over to Burton Overy, and back to the Holt. Scent was quite good, but hounds could make nothing of it in covert. Presently out comes a grand old dog fox, and walks within a few yards of a group of people; he was that tired he couldn’t raise a trot; but his head was up, and he looked so proud, that not one of ’em has the heart to holloa. So he walks slowly on to Noseley. When hounds comes out of the wood, not one of them could touch the line—not even a feather. It’s very odd how scent fails with a beaten fox. That’s why it’s so important to give hounds plenty of room towards the end of a good hunt, when they starts to slow down.



"COTTESMORE"
(EVAN HANBURY)

Vanity Fair Cartoon

Fernie Country

Hundreds of foxes owes their lives to people being too eager, or lighting a cigarette when they are up wind to hounds; no one ought to light a cigarette during a hunt. It's not fair on hounds.

In Mr. Fernie's time, I comed out late, and was trying to pick up hounds; and knowing this was the afternoon draw I waits by that haystack, very quiet like; but couldn't hear a sound. Out comes a fox, and cocks his head on one side and listens; then he trots off to Noseley. Then I hears the horn away by Norton way, and out comes another, and does just the same. They'd heard the horn afore me, and knowed as well as I did that hounds would be there in the afternoon to draw; so offed it.

I've often met foxes, when I've been riding to the meet, that have been put away by people riding through a small covert. No one ought to go within a hundred yards of a covert. The foot people often spoil a draw, by collecting at a covert-side and talking. They foxes know what it means, they know.

This is Noseley, where Sir Arthur Hazlerigg lives—one of the finest sportsmen in the country. A great big gentleman he is; used to be Captain of the County Cricket Team, same as his son ought to be now.* Very keen on shooting he is; but at the end of the

* Dick's prophecy has come true.

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season, sure as I'm alive, there're more foxes here than pheasants.

Foxes seem to know where they are appreciated. They ran one round from Shangton Holt, and lost him in the gardens. Couldn't make nuffing of him; and where do you think they found him? When the keeper comes home, and goes to make up his fire, there's his lordship curled up in the coal-box, a-warming his toes by the fire, as if he were Sir Arthur hisself.

There was another, what came in to have a bite in the dining-room at Noseley; but he didn't reckon as the hounds would be so unmannered as to come in uninvited after him; but even then, in all the confusion, he slipped them and got away.

There was a fox what used to beat Freeman regular at Kelmarsh, and one day blowed if Mr. Tree didn't find him in the front hall, a-waiting for his tea, bold as brass.

There was another, what wanted to improve his learning; so went to Naseby School—and he's still there; for Lord Annaly had his mask set up, and gived it to the school.

See that fence over there in the bottom? I once saw a lady jump it. She was being piloted by Jem Mason—him what won the National, sixty year back it must have been. They called her Skittles. I never knew her proper name. She were not what you'd call a

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"lady," but was a fine rider; went like smoke, and was very quiet and well spoken. Some of the ladies made a fuss, and ordered their husbands to tell Sir Arthur—he were Chairman of the Hunt—and the Master, Mr. Tailby, they would warn off the Hunt, if she were let come out. Mr. Tailby said he weren't a master of morals, and he would send no one home what behaved themselves in the hunting field; whatever they did elsewhere weren't his affair. Sir Arthur, he said that as people took their wives to theatres, and paid to see women as were no better than her, he couldn't see any objection to her in the hunting field, where they could avoid her if they wished, and that she were welcome at Noseley. He was a real pious gentleman, too, and no hypocrite.

When they next met at Noseley, Mr. Bainbridge, who was mounting her, says:

"Come on in; this is your best friend, who says you are welcome."

"No," says she, "I'll stop at the gate."

"Why?" says he.

"Because he has a wife and daughters, and is the only real gentleman in Leicestershire."

Would you believe it, that Lady Stamford, what had been a circus rider, and was no better than she ought to 'a' been, was the one what was most agin her. When Skittles heard on it, she laughs and says:

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"I don't know why she should give herself such airs; she's not even head of our profession—Lady Cardigan is."

A merry lass she was, and as pretty as a peach. One day she had a fall, and her skirt got left hung up on the saddle. Real murderous things they wore then, long and heavy, not mere aprons as they are now; and underneath they wore white frillies. There was a lot of chaff among the gentlemen as to who should go to her rescue. They all asks for a married man. They then says that Parson Thorpe o' Burton Latimer should; but he says he weren't married, and adds a prayer after it. Open-handed lady she was; did a wunnerful lot of kindness to the poor.

She were larking home one day with Jem, and just as they pass the parson of Skeffington, she sang out:

"Jem, if you go on like this, my —— will be as red as a beef-steak."

The parson didn't know where to look, he laughed so.

There have been a fine lot of sporting parsons in the country. There was Mr. Davenport of Skeffington—"The Bishop" they used to call him—and his son after him, and Mr. Costobadie—he was a great judge of hounds, but a better of port.

Mr. Thorpe of Burton Overy rode very reckless; but

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when he was asked how³ he could do it, seeing as how his two brothers were killed riding, says :

“That’s the reason. You never in your life heard of three brothers being killed.”

He and his father were parsons between them of Burton Overy for over a hundred years.

Mr. Costobadie’s son—him what wrote the history of the Billesdon Hunt—once bumped Mr. Tailby at a fence, and didn’t half hear of it; but, later in the day, down by Medbourne, he sets the field over a great flight of rails. Mr. Tailby would never refuse to follow any man; has a go and hits the top rail, and only gets over with a bad scramble. He soon catches up the boy.

“I forgive you,” he says. “We cut ’em all down, and I wouldn’t have gone if you hadn’t.”

I saw Mr. Tailby, close to here, take on an oxer and a very big fence, when there was an easy place quite close, and hounds not doing much.

“I’ve had my eye on that fence for a long time, but never came on it when hounds were running,” he says.

There was another parson, what loved a title as much as he hated “Tobacco Smoke,” as he called it.

He gets into a railway carriage, and makes a lot of farmers knock out their pipes and cigars, ’cause he couldn’t a-bear the smell of tobacco smoke, he says. Before the train starts, he sees two Lords get into the

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next carriage; so he gets out of his, and follows 'em. At the next station one of the farmers gets out, and pops his head in next door, where the Lords was a-puffing away, and says :

“I see, parson, you don't mind smoke, if it's the smoke of the Lord.”

One day a gentleman, what had made his money in soups, twice bumped His Reverence into a gate-post.

“You damned bone-boiling blackguard! How dare you come out with these hounds, and ride gentlemen over gate-posts!”

The gentleman's wife heard it, and were very angry.

“How dare you call anyone a blackguard! You, who are a disgrace to your parish, and a disgrace to your cloth, keeping a woman in Lunnon, as everybody knows you do!”

“My dear lady! My dear lady!” His Reverence exclaims.

“Don't call me your dear lady, or I'll knock your damned hat off!”

Gentlemen are often very rude to each other in the field—generally because they're frightened, I says. When you hear a man a-holloaing and a-damning it's usually because his nerve's gone.

Mr. Straker, what broke his neck with the Cottesmore some years back, made his money in iron and



HIM THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1884

Fernie Country

coal in the North; one day he calls Mr. Kaye, what made his in the stocking trade in Leicester, a damned linen-draper; to which he replies by calling Mr. Straker a damned ironmonger.

It was at Burton Overy that I first saw the Empress of Austria. There was a great lady, every inch of her. They could see she were an Empress half a mile off. When she saw these great hairy bullfinches, I heard her say to Captain Middleton, what piloted her :

“Remember, I do not mind the falls; but I will not scratch my face.”

There was Mr. Perry, Rector of Slawston. I once saw him holloa the Squire on to a sheepdog, and he didn't half hear some very unholy words. Lord Spencer once did the same, below Illston; it were Colonel Baillie's dog, what was called Foxy.

A few parsons still hunt—the Rev. Mills at Oxendon, and the Rev. Dilley at Lubenham, and Mr. Hichens at Guilsborough. Mr. Jackson of Naseby's always out on his feet. But you know what they calls Nonconformist chapels here about? Monuments to foxhunting; but I don't hold with that; I says that a man can be a good foxhunter *and* a good parson; it's a pity there ain't more of 'em. They're men anyway, and that goes a long way.

This Shangton Holt's one of the surest finds in the whole country. I've seen it drawn three times in a day,

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and hold the third time. I think I told you about that before, when you was up with me at Melton. Major Paget rents it for the hunt. A beautiful line of country all up here. You see how perfectly the coverts are placed.

You see that haystack? For half a season a fox used to live there, and used to watch the hunt, till they started cutting it; and then a labourer gave him away, and even then he wouldn't bolt; and they had to send a man up to the top of the stack to poke him out, he were that bold.

Now we're coming to Rolleston, what belongs to Lord Michelham. Can't understand that young gentleman. Would you believe it—having a place like this in the middle of the best hunting country in the whole world, and not going in for hunting? Look at the fences round here, and see how strong they are. This is probably some of the strongest country, next to that round Waterloo, there is in England. Don't seem natural, do it?

Lord Churchill—him what ran Ascot Horse-Races—lived there. He was Chairman of the Hunt for years. He had it off Mr. Greene, what was Master of the Quorn afore my time. Very nice gentleman Mr. Greene was; the first Leicestershire man, born and bred, to be Master. They met here, and he went out for an hour, and comed home; says to his groom :



"A LEICESTERSHIRE MAN"
(WILLIAM WARD TAILBY)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1899

Fernie Country

“I shan’t want a horse again, I’m afraid”; goes in the house, and in ten minutes was dead.

The same thing happened to Mr. Perry Herrick, of Beaumanor in the Forest; he were over eighty at the time.

Over there’s Skeffington, where Squire Tailby lived. Captain Furlong’s at the Hall now—him whose son was second in the National on Really True. Captain George Tailby’s living in a smaller house he built hisself nearby. His uncle always used the Kennels in Billesdon, which Lord Suffield built for the Quorn. Looking away back you see what they call the Skeffington Vale, and a nice bit of country that is, too. Turn in at the gate here. That’s Billesdon Coplow on the right, and the border of the Fernie and Quorn. There you see Norton and Gaulby churches. The house in front of us is Ashlands, where Miss Butler lives. She’s given up hunting now, but still keeps a horse or two. Wery devoted to animals, she is. This is perhaps the most popular bit of the whole Fernie country. From anywhere round here to Billesdon Coplow is reckoned to be the finest line in the whole of England. You won’t find a strand of wire over the whole of the country; though the fences are powerful strong, they are jumpable with a good horse, and it always seems to carry scent.

Look at Tamborough Hill. Old Charles Isaac

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planted that, in Mr. Fernie's time. There's many a great gallop started from there. Don't matter in which direction you go, you're bound to have a good hunt. Lord Ebury were very set on that covert. You remember, the poor gentleman died after breaking his leg with the Pytchley hounds at the end of last season, and he gave directions that his ashes were to be scattered round Tamborough Hill, where he'd spent the happiest days of his life. Which reminds me of a gentleman what left directions, that when he died his skin was to be made into a saddle, and given to a lady friend of his.

Lord Ebury was one of the nicest gentlemen what ever came out hunting. The sweetest voice you ever heard. The ladies were all gone on him, he was that good looking; but I never saw him as much as look at one of 'em; he were that fond of hunting, and Miss Betty his daughter, what married Lord Harcourt.

We'll have a look at Norton Gorse now. Mr. Greene planted it in the fifties. The fox generally runs out by Thurnby covert into the Quorn country, to the Coplow. Mr. Forsell looks after Thurnby, and is a great help in the Thursday country. A few years ago hounds had a wunnerful hunt from there; they ran right away beyond Thorpe Satchville, almost up to Melton. There were only about half a dozen left.



"BWUCE AND FWED"

(COLONEL BRUCE JOHNSTONE and MAJOR FRED JOHNSTONE)

The Tattler, 1928

Fernie Country

The two Colonels Johnstone—one was killed—hunted with the Quorn ever since I can remember—ollers counted their fences, they did, to see which of 'em had jumped most at the end of the day, and there was Mr. and Mrs. Victor Emanuel—they used to be at Rockingham. It was the first big hunt he was ever in, and I never see'd a man so pleased in my life. Considering the little experience of hunting they'd had, they both went remarkably well. He's Master of the Pytchley now, but lets his business get in the way of his hunting. Didn't get a single day's hunting while he were Master. Redic'lous nonsense I calls it. Said as how owing to the slump, he couldner leave America.

Now, if you had a decent kerridge, instead of this beastly motee-car, we could go right up to Norton Gorse; but this thing would get stuck in the mud, it would. There it is, amongst the pine trees, and Houghton-on-the-Hill church is on the right of it. Just over the hill there you get to Quenby, and out to Ashby Pastures or Barkby Holt. There's a fine view on your left as ever you'd wish to see—right away over to the Woodland Pytchley country. I reckon you can see twenty miles from here.

That's Stretton Hall away on the left, where Colonel Packe used to live. He's another fine preserver of foxes. You see that red house over there away on the hill? It was there that the Prince of Wales broke his

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collarbone. They'd had a real good hunt, and right at the end of it, gor blimey! if His Royal Highness didn't go at the boundary fence, a big fence on a bank, with a nasty drop and a ditch. There weren't more than half a dozen people left out.

One of the gentlemen goes off to get a car and a doctor; but his horse was very tired, and he meets two men on a motee-bike; so he gives his horse to one to lead to the village, and rides pillion on the bike himself; he did look comic. The Prince sent the man what comed for him in his car—a higgler from Leicester—such a nice letter: he was as proud as a dog with two tails to get it.

Stoughton lies away on our right. That used to belong to the Powys-Kecks; now it's all broken up. We'll turn back here for Glenn. Glenn Gorse is an extraordinary covert. There's a lot of horrid little villas built right into it, and yet it always seems to hold a fox. That's Glenn Oak, what belongs to Sir Maurice Levy—a good covert early in the year, but a bit small to hold them, when it gets late, and they goes off to the Gorse. Sir Maurice and all his family come out hunting, and have a rare lark. Sir Maurice bought Mowsley covert in the Monday country, which was very good of him, considering the long way away he lives from it; he took a deal o' trouble that there was always a fox in it. He's got the house that the

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Duchess of Hamilton and Mr. Cornaby Forster used to have.

Mr. Kaye lives opposite. He had the South Notts. They're a sporting family; all of 'em hunt; Miss Sylvia, what was, is the pick of the lot—a real horsewoman she is; married a soldier, Colonel Wylie. Mr. Kaye's Joint-Master of the Woodland now.

This is Glenn village. Leicester's spoilt most of the country north of this; it's growed that outrageous, it has; and what with lorries running up and down this main road, why a fox, he ain't got any chance to get across it night or day. The fact is, this country on the west ain't scarcely ever run over. There aren't any coverts in it, till you get down to John and Jane Ball. At one time there was a litter of foxes that lived at Evington. They were always running into Leicester, right among the tramlines; they used to get into them stinking back gardens. Talking about back gardens, I remember, before the War, hounds found at Peatling, and ran by the Sewerage Farm, and across the river; and only Clarence Johnson, Major Paget, and another gentleman, who was a stranger, got over. They ran straight across under Glenn Manor, and put him to ground in a garden within a field of Leicester Race-course; and there was nobody else anywhere near 'em. On another occasion—about twenty years ago it must

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have been, perhaps not as much—they ran the fox right across the racecourse when there was a meeting on.

This be Wistow Estate. A man called Deacon used to farm it. Regular spoilt it he did; but as he be dead I'd better say no more about him. Wistow is where King Charles the First came after the Battle of Naseby. Sir Henry Halford supplied the King and Prince Rupert with fresh horses. They were so hurried they hadn't time even to change saddles, and the King's and Prince Rupert's saddles are in the Hall to this day. You see that old butt there? That's where old Sir Henry Halford used to shoot. He and old Lord Cottesloe were tremendous keen on shooting at Bisley, and it was because of that, and having no children, he left Lord Cottesloe all this Wistow property.

This is the Monday country. Now we're across the other main Leicester—London road. That's Peatling covert you can just see away on the left. A good sportsman, Mr. Bailey, looks after that. I'm afeared he loses a sad lot of poultry; but if anybody laid a finger on one of his foxes I reckon he'd kill him. He don't ride neither.

Did I ever tell you how the Fernie country started? Mr. Dick Sutton—away back in the fifties—he were a terrible over-rider of his father's hounds, and one day



"A FATHER OF THE BELVOIR"
(JOHN EARLE WELBY)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1900

Fernie Country

Sir Richard, he got real mad with him, and he fair started to rate him, and finishes up, "if you want to over-ride hounds, take twenty couple into that damned Harborough country, and over-ride 'em there if you can, or break your bally neck!"

And, impudent like, Master Dick he says: "Done with you, father; I will."

Two years later Sir Richard dies, and Mr. Dick, having carried on both packs to the end of the season, gives up, and Lord Stamford takes the Quorn, but wouldn't hunt the Harborough side; so Mr. Tailby took it on, and there's always been a separate pack hunting the Harborough country ever since.

There was a most dreadful row, when Mr. Tailby gives up the hounds in '70.*

Mr. Coupland he claims back the country for the Quorn. Mr. Tailby says he took and hunted it, when Lord Stamford refused to hunt it after Sir Richard's death. Sir Arthur Hazlerigg, Sir Henry Halford of Wistow, and almost all the farmers and landowners, men what had been in the country quite a time,† all denied the Quorn's right to the country, and asked Sir Bache Cunard of Neville Holt to hunt the country same as Mr. Tailby had, and he says as he will.

Then them Melton folk gets together, and put Lord Wilton, a foreigner from Lancashire in the Chair;

* 1871.

† Quite two hundred years.

Rum 'uns to Follow

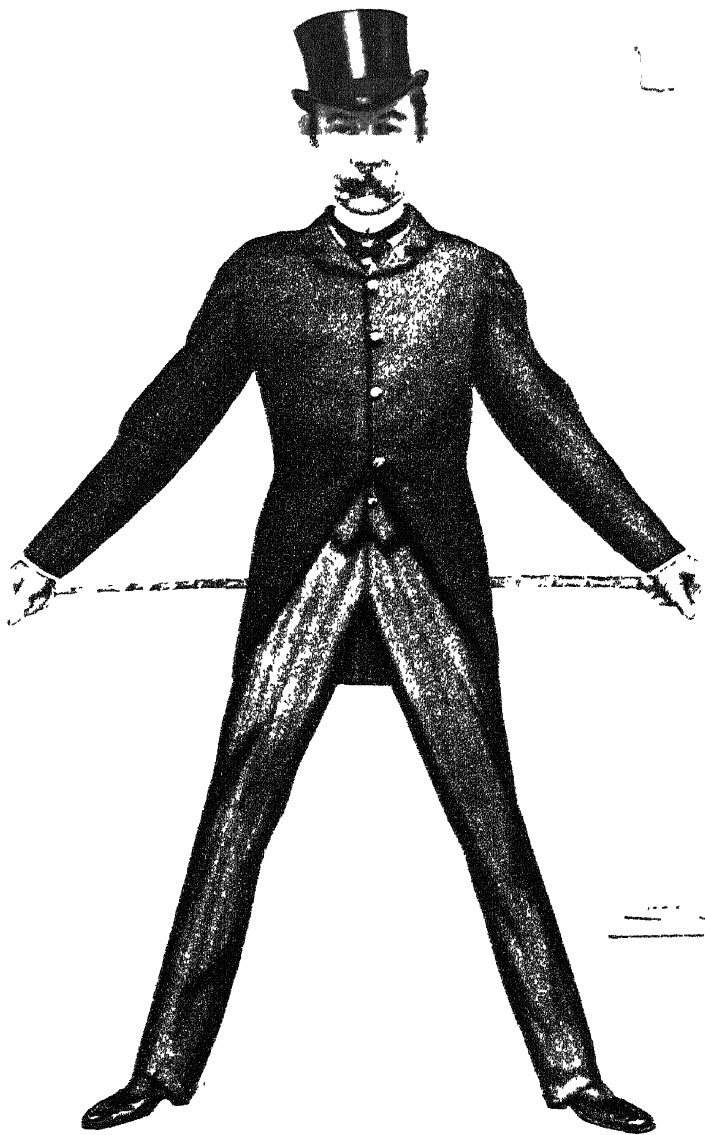
and Mr. Little Gilmour, another from Scotland, and a host more, mere squatters, they starts a great holloaing; not that there weren't some county men with 'em. They wants the matter referred to a Mr. Boodle—did you ever hear such a name? The farmers were furious; held a meeting, and wrote letters to the Lunnon papers. But what we wanted to know was, who Mr. Boodle were any way?*

Many of the gentlemen wouldn't speak to each other; and when Sir Arthur Fludyer were told that Sir Arthur Hazlerigg were a-backing of Sir Bache, he says it were the only unwise thing that he ever heard Sir Arthur to have done.

Well, for some reason, it was referred to and decided by this here Mr. Boodle, and very clever he was too; for he satisfied both parties. He said as how the country belonged to the Quorn, but Sir Bache were to hunt it with their permission; and so it went on till Mr. Fernie died, when the present Sir Arthur Hazlerigg and Major Burnaby arranged for the Quorn to give up their nominal right, and let this bit of the country be a separate Hunt.

You see, before the row, it was called the Billesdon Hunt; but after, it was Sir Bache Cunard's Hounds, and then Mr. Fernie's Hounds. When the Quorn gave

* The Masters of Foxhounds Committee of Boodle's Club settled hunting disputes, before the present Association was formed.



"A CUNARDER"
(SIR BACHE E. CUNARD, BART.)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1881

Fernie Country

up all claim to it, they could call it a Hunt; so they call it the Fernie Hunt after dear old Mr. Fernie. He left his hounds to the country.

You've no idea how spiteful some was. The Quornites used to come out in rat-catcher, just to show their disrespect; but all except one or two old gentlemen soon give that up. They found it a bit painful being hustled at fences, and cursed as grooms what ought to be on the road, and put over gate-posts.

This would be Countesthorpe. Hounds don't often run here. Too many people I reckon. You see, all round here the fences are much smaller, and not half so strong. A wunnerful country for a young horse; gives him confidence; but at the same time he can't take too many liberties. Wherever you look you never see a ploughed field. The Fernie is the only pack which hunts every day in Leicestershire, and every day on grass. I've seen those iron railings jumped a lot of times. You see, they run a long way, and the brook is at the bottom; and if a gentleman has got over the brook, he don't want to go down to the end to the gate, and get caught up by them what got over by the bridge; so he just pops over.

Mr. Edmonstone and Major Massey have done a lot for this bit of country away on our right. In the old days the hounds never seemed to go over it; but when

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they wanted to hunt three days a week reg'lar, they had to find a bit more country; so Mr. Edmonstone—before he was Master it was—got a bit of rough land, and turned it into a very nice covert. The gentlemen calls it Charlie's Gorse after him; and when he made another covert, just out by Ashby Parva, they calls it Gwen's Gorse, after Mrs. Edmonstone. It's funny how names get changed. Gilmorton Covert, which we're just coming to, that was built by Mr. Gosling about a hundred years ago; and when I was a young man it was always called Goose's Covert; but you never hear that name now. This is Peatling Parva, where Colonel Gemmell, who died three years ago, used to live. He were a very great loss to the Hunt. Very popular with everybody. He'd got a son; but he's soldiering in India. I hopes he'll soon come back, and hunt as a gentleman should, instead of going out to them foreign parts. I never did hold with that there abroad. Miss Molly she hunts.

It was just down there that Sir Harold Wernher had some very bad luck. His first horse broke his back jumping that brook, after he had landed safe and sound, and then his second horse drops down dead as soon as it gets in the stable. I never heard of a man losing two horses in one day.

Now we're coming to Bruntingthorpe. They killed a fox in the churchyard in Mr. Fernie's time, after one

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of the finest runs I ever see'd. One hour and forty minutes it were, over the very pick of all the country round about here; and he were that stiff, that after they'd killed him, Thatcher stood him up facing the hounds. That I've only seen once before in me whole life. That covert in front on the hill is Jane Ball, and John Ball is just the other side of it.

It's very seldom you ever sees hounds truly run from scent to view in this country. I don't think I've see'd it more than a dozen times, if that—and once was in Lincolnshire. You see, in an enclosed country like this, a fox, when he's sinking, ollers tries to beat hounds by lying down in a hedge-row, and letting 'em run over him. If they push him up again, that's not running from sight to view; but when running hard and the leading hounds throw up their heads and catch a view o' him, and run into him before he gets to the nearest hedge, that's the true thing.

All the country on both sides of the turnpike round here belongs to Mr. Harry Mills; and he takes down every inch of wire hisself. Those coverts are supposed to be called after John and Jane Ball, who were notorious highwaymen, and were hung each side of the road. The farmers all round here are wunnerful good sportsmen, and, considering the hounds run to John and Jane Ball once a week all through the season, they need to be.

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Mr. Lord and the man what looked after the fences round Knaptoft were wunnerful keen on having foxes here, and after February they used to let the hounds find; but if they thought it was the vixen, they opened the earth for her, and then shut it again, and left the hounds trying to find her, and said nowt about it.

That funny little place on the right is Shearsby Bath. There's a wunnerful spring there. When General Pearson was training horses over at Stoke Albany, one of 'em, Lord Lyon, had a touch of rheumatics, and he used to send a carriage and pair over every day to get water for that horse. Must be near twenty miles; and he got him fit and well, and he won the Derby Horse-Race, he did.

Now we're on the main Leicester road again, coming through the cutting between John and Jane. There's Saddington on the left, and Gumley on the hill, where Mrs. Murray Smith lives. A gentleman what used to be called Mr. Gumley Smith lived there. They wrote a book about him called "Green Peas at Christmas."

A lot of people have been there since him: there was Lord Shrewsbury, what was the great-great-grandfather of the present Earl. They have his grandfather's first hunting clothes at Glenn—a little pink coat, with Quorn buttons and all. He couldn't have been over six at the time. Then Captain Whitmore had it.

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He was one of them what came out in rat-catcher with Sir Bache Cunard's. Old Mrs. Belville was there for a time, before Mr. Murray Smith bought it. He married Lord Belper's sister from over the Quorn side. Poor lady, she lost her three sons and her husband in eight years, one after the other. Two was killed in the War. You can just see the memorial to them against the sky between they two clumps of trees. Now there's only Miss Betty, what's Mrs. Badger, left, and she's gone to the Heythrop, more's the pity.

Mrs. George—Miss Olive Lawson of Melton that was, what married the youngest son—has a young gentleman that looks like making into a real good 'un; another has just won the big hunter race of the Guards at Hawthorn Hill at his first try. Hope it don't turn him to that there racing though.

I see'd Peaker jump the big double what runs down from Gumley Wood to the canal with wire on both sides of it. Whether he didn't see it, or couldn't stop, I don't know; but he cleared the whole thing—never laid an iron on it. It fair makes me shiver to think of it.*

The opening meet's always held there, and for years an old publican out o' Leicester, called Monk—he were a native of Foxton—always came out with a coach and four. He and his party arrived all dressed up in top-

* This was on my horse Placid Joe.—ED.

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hats like real toffs, sitting on the top of the coach, and a little to eat and a lot to drink inside the coach. About two o'clock the position was reversed. The empties was on top of the coach, and the fulls was inside the coach, with their legs a-sticking out of the windows. Very comical it was. When he died he left all his money to Foxton village. They built a village hall and play-grounds with it.

From here to Walton Holt is a beautiful line of country. Walton Holt was Arthur Thatcher's favourite covert. I've seen some wunnerful hunts from there. How he and Frank Freeman did love getting into each other's country. It were a regular joke, Arthur going from Walton Holt to Kilworth Sticks on a Monday, and Frank chasing the fox back again on the Wednesday. Regular as clockwork they used to do it. That's Mowsley covert on our left, what I told you belongs to Sir Maurice Levy. In about a mile we should be able to see just the top of Bosworth covert. That belongs to the farmer, Mr. Marsh. There isn't a keener foxhunter in all England than Mr. Marsh, or a more miserable one if they draws his covert blank; and he sees to it that he ain't miserable very often. Now we're coming back to Bosworth. The house in front of us is where Colonel Spiller lives. He and his wife and daughter all hunt. She's a rare little lady to go. Don't suppose she weighs much

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above five stone, and last season she broke in a great fourteen-stone thoroughbred horse. Looked like a sparrow on a round of beef on it, she did.

Mr. Miles the vet. lives there, and a wery good vet. he is too. Does all the work for the hunting gentlemen round here, although he's quite young. A good man to hounds he is, but never lets it interfere with his work.

This little bit of country between here and Welford is always a bit in dispute as to where the boundary lies between the two Hunts; but the Masters have always got on very well together, and there's never been any unpleasantness; and then again hounds very seldom run across it.

That's Wheler, where Major Paget lives. He fancies hisself as a bit of a literary cove, he does. What, we've done fifty miles? You don't really say that? But I s'pose we have. I remember Major Paget being blooded by Tom Firr in the nineties. Gassed in the War he was—coughs something awful in a fog, and can't go near a crowd of sweaty horses, and generally rides hard pullers. His two sons are just as keen as he is, though very wild. Pity they are generally on their backs.

There were Mr. John, he rode a good chestnut horse, but a most owdacious animal—went where it liked. One day, down by Barby, he put old Charlie Thomp-

Rum 'uns to Follow

son—him they used to call Bonnety Bob, because his mother made Queen Victoria's bonnets—he put him over a gate-post. He starts a-asking what and why; but Mr. Paget, he say, “Why swear at me? D’you think I *like* doing it?” But that wery same horse carried the Major and Dr. Morrison at that there pageant they had at Leicester, as if he’d been in a circus all his life. You should ha’ seen that: it were grand—all the Kings and Queens o’ England, no end o’ horses, Lady Feilding and her little boy from Newnham Paddox, they was beautiful; but the last scene were the best; Leicester a hundred years ago it were. There were sheep, and cattle, and carriages, and coaches, and highwaymen, and the Prince and Princess o’ Wales in a carriage, and a hansom cab, and a real train, and the Yeomanry, and pack-horses, and ladies riding pillion—real old times it were. But the best o’ the whole show were the Atherstone Hounds, and a lot o’ people a-galloping round the ring. Ever heard twenty thousand people give a view holloa? Well, if you’d been there you would. I were sitting in front of a chap with his gurl, and he were a-naming all the hounds, and a-calling out to them by name. She thought him grand, and asked him how he could remember them all. “Quite easy,” he says; “if you rode as near the Quorn as I do, you’d know every one of them hounds.”

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“Except old Mendacity,” say I.

Mr. Wright’s the Master—very generous gentleman—he sent ’em over every night for a fortnight, and put up the horses at the Repository, all at his own expense. I never see’d a keener sportsman in my life; didn’t know much about it when he took them, but he got Arthur Thatcher for his huntsman; unfortunately he died at the end of his second season. So Mr. Wright got Nimrod Capel—keen little fellow Nimrod.

The wire’s ollers been bad in the Atherstone, and after Mrs. Inge gave up it got worse. There was a proper lady—her father and her husband had had ’em afore her—hunted ’em all during the War, and were highly respected by everyone, she and her daughter; regular pictures on their horses they were, and real workmen too.

This Mr. Wright, he had to get a pack of hounds together; but Arthur could show sport with anything. But it’s with the wire that Mr. Wright’s done such wonders; there ain’t a field you can’t jump out of nowadays, and all the wire flagged. The farmers’ll do any mortal thing for him—heaps o’ foxes, never a blank day. They only has very few people out, but, my word! they do go—ollers jumps iron railings, and that Mr. Wright, he never opens a gate; grand horseman he is; fair made that country, he has. I see him jump four gates running the only day I were out, and

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a Miss Standish and a Miss Young follows him. I only hopes they keeps him.

Captain Bretherton—his son was killed in the War—lived at Wheler when I first knew it. He were a queer 'un; never saw such a toff as he was, and rode the very worst horses you ever did see. He were spoilt when he bought a horse at Leicester for ten pounds and sold it next week for a hundred and fifty, and did the same about half a dozen times; he thought he could always do it, but, take it from me, you can't. Ruined his fun it did, and now he's got money, he don't hunt: offen the way.

Mrs. Van Raalte she took it off him. She has a rare pop. Hunted with the Cottesmore afore she came here; had a wunnerful horse called White Socks, what Captain Stanley gived her, as no one else could ride one side of it. One of the greatest jumpers I ever saw. Poor beast broke his leg on the flat below John Ball, and all the field took their hats off to him as they passed—he was that well known and respected.

There are a powerful lot more, I never did tell you about. Mr. Sandy Cross, what married Lady Victoria, had a grand stud of horses at Horninghold. He were a great friend of Captain Johnny McKie. That were one of the very best men that ever crossed Leicestershire—so quiet he was, and such a good sportsman in every

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way. Tom Hobbs too—Gentleman Hobbs they calls him—one of the best men I ever saw on a young 'un. Such hands! The gentlemen think a lot of him. You see, he volunteered for the infantry in the War, when he was over fifty. None of your Remounts for him! He can see a fox further than any man I know.

Talking of Remounts reminds me of Colonel Wood—Woody he were known to everyone—looked after the Remount at Melton for years. He were a hard little nut; broken most of the bones in his body; but to the very last had a go. Just before the end they took away his horses, and only let him have a pony to look at hounds from; but one day hounds crossed in front of him, and off he went, as if on the living best; took two falls he did, and said they'd done him a power of good. He must 'a' been nigh eighty.

General and Mrs. Jack have the Old Hall. They are both very well liked, and I never saw a little lady love hunting more.

The General had a horse called The Turk—won a lot o' races on him—he was a bad brute to ride when he first got him. A real gentleman he is; takes as much care, or more, of a hireling as he does one of his own. I do hate to hear a man say, "Oh, what's it matter? It's only a hireling." It's a horse, I say, anyway, and as sich should be respected. Mrs. Jack had a

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nasty fright this year: she were a-riding over the bridge near to the Prince of Wales's, when it gave way on one side, and throws her into the brook, with Colonel Alexander and his horse on the top of her. It were a mercy she weren't hurt.

Mr. Jack Belville is at the Hall—one of the kindest men as ever comed out; advise anyone how to ride or bit their horses.

General Sir Bryan Mahon, what won the Pig-Hunting Cup,* hunted with Colonel Wood. Funny thing, I see'd four of them Pig Prizes in houses not ten miles from here. Major Bates has one at Oxendon, Mr. Bromilow another at Bitteswell, and there used to be one at Sludge Hall. Mr. Bates, as won it, was killed riding at Weedon, poor gentleman.

Turn down here; it'll take us to the station. On our right Captain Bretherton used to train his hair-trunks, what he called racehorses.

I see'd Dr. Morrison, son of old Dr. Morrison of Hallaton, jump that very big fence down there. Pity his business interferes so much with his hunting. Very fond him and his sister is of it; and if he had more horses I reckon he'd be as good as anyone with the Fernie. Took on the Basset Hounds when Captain Heseltine died. He was such a nice gentleman; fine huntsman too; hunted the Essex for years. Used to

* The Kadir Cup.

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wear a funny felt hat shaped like an ordinary topper; they called him the Bishop of Lutterworth a-cause of it.

One lady stranger hears them all call him Bishop, and taking their hats off to him in fun, and says, "Isn't it strange for a Bishop to hunt in pink?"

He happened to have on a very old coat that day. "That's not pink," says Mr. Reggie Chaplin, "it's dispicable* purple."

Here we are at the station. Yes, Sir; I'll be very pleased to go round the Pytchley country with you some other time.

What? We've got half an hour to wait? I see'd a very curious run past this station—it 'ud be about 1910. The Guards oficers ran their race just below Gallow Hill near Harborough, and Mr. Fernie's met at Foxton after it. Found a fox at the Foxton end o' the Laughton Hills, and ran him to the canal. He were headed at the bridge, and got atween the railway and the canal, and ran right away to Winwick village. There was some rare fun, I can tell you; for them oficers, they would charge the river as it strayed across the valley, but the knowing 'uns rode the towpath and watched all the fun. One gent got in three times. The fox knew his way, and never really crossed the river at all, and got to ground in the main earth below Winwick Hall.

* "Episcopal" appears to be the word Dick was aiming at.

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See the smoke o' that train that's just gone past, how it rolls along the ground? That's the only true sign I've never known not lie about scent. If you see smoke or steam keeping down low, you can lay a haystack to a hayseed that there'll be a good scent—and almost the same when the frost's a-coming out of the ground, that there won't; but I have knowed that wrong. The more I hunts, the less I knows about scent. They do say that there's only one thing queerer than scent, and that's a woman—and they're right. I've see'd hounds run and not run when, for the life of yer, you can't see the slightest difference in the conditions. One day they'll run hard down wind, and not be able to go a yard up wind; same in fog and snow, though I've often noticed that a drop o' rain alters scent—if it's been bad it improves, and if it's been good it don't seem to hold.

There's no doubt that foxes carry a very different scent; a vixen in cub never has none, and hounds don't seem to try after her; I've see'd it often in the spring. If there's a hot sun and a scent, a fox don't seem able to stand up before hounds for more than ten minutes. I see'd a great run from Creaton Covert, what Mr. Drummond owns, a few years back—end of April it were, and as hot as midsummer. They fair raced him down over all them terrible Cottesbrooke doubles, over the brook to the railway by Clint Hill, where he was



CAPTURED AT COLES LODGE

(FREDDIE CRIPPS, SAM HAYES, SAM ASHTON, MOP FINCH, PRIEST ALEXANDER, H. WHALEY, SIDNEY GREEN, TOM CAVANAGH, THE ADMIRAL BEATTY)

The Bystander, 1927

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headed and ran straight to Hazelbeach Hill, and killed him in the garden. Couldn't ha' been more than ten or twelve minutes, but there must ha' been twenty empty saddles. Lord Londonderry were out; said it were the fastest thing he'd ever see'd. Hounds has to run very fast over Cottesbrooke, or the Waterloo country, to encourage you to shirk gate-riding. Them doubles was made about a hundred year back to prevent the spread o' foot and mouth disease; and now them fools in Lunnon put on a fifteen-mile restriction—redic'lous nonsense! Round Fawsley is worst for doubles, that it be. Some says as Sir Charles Knightley made 'em, as he were the only man what would try and jump 'em; but I bet he wouldn't now they've growed that tremendous. Fair sticklers they be.

There be those what believe in tremendous bits on a horse. Well, I ain't one of 'em. Instruments of torture, I call 'em. There was a Russian gentleman comed down here; strong as a bull he was; ride—he could ride, and no mistake; but the things he put in his horse's mouth fair made me sick. A snaffle takes a lot o' beating in a grass country. Some says that only one horse went well in a snaffle, and he went better in a double; I don't hold with that. They talk o' snaffle hands, not snaffle mouths; but that's all my eye. I've knowed horses that went mad with a curb, however gentle you were with 'em. Mr. Stokes had a horse,

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one of the best performers you ever did see—jump a house he would; but he were returned three or four times; none of 'em at Melton could hold one side of him. Put whole ironmongers' shops in his mouth, they did. Mr. Stokes asks one of the Fernie gentlemen, if he cared for a hot 'un; he says he don't mind, if he can jump, and he can try him in the Thursday country, where he could run away till he was tired. The horse turns up with a bit a foot long and a sharp curb. The gentleman, he ties his curb reins in a knot, and just looses him off in one o' those great grass fields, and lets him rip over a fence; then he turns him gently round, and pats his neck and speaks to him, gets him steady, and comes back at the fence. As soon as the horse see it, off he rushes like a train, expecting a haul at the curb; but he finds even the snaffle rein flapping; that kind of frightened him, and he takes the fence by the roots, but don't fall; up goes his head expecting a jab, but it don't come. The gentleman let him gallop on; then, patting him again, very quietly pull him up on the snaffle, speaking to him all the time. He rides him all day with the curb tied up, and he goes perfect for him. Next time he rides him, he has a standing martingale and a rubber snaffle. Sold him to a lady what say, he's the best she's ever had; but put a curb on him now, and he'll off it with you.

You can't stop a horse by pulling at his mouth, any

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more than by pulling at his tail, or at the handles of a bike—nor hold him up neither. I've see'd a hundred men throw a horse down for every one what could hold one up.

It's a strange thing that, before the War, you never see'd a horse in a snaffle out hunting; gentlemen didn't think they were properly dressed without a double bridle; but now you see about one in five of 'em in snaffles.

Here comes my train. I hope we gets as good a day for the Pytchley country. But mind you bring a horse and trap.

Three
Pytchley

III — Pytchley

FROM the nine o'clock train from Melton the well-known figure of Dick Heathen alighted one morning on Harborough platform.

Seeing as you wanted to start early, I comed by this train. Many's the horse I've brought down on it to hunt round here; rare place to school a bold 'un, but Lor help you on a sticky horse!

What? You only got that motee-car again? You know I can't abide them things. Oughtn't to be allowed, I says. Wouldn't have come, if I'd know'd, that I wouldn't. Slow? I don't mind going fast; but it's the noise and the smell I canna abide; ain't natural, they ain't.

Well, here's the Market Square. Mr. Fernie's ollers meets here on Boxing Day. As many as twenty thousand people comes out to see 'em. Over the bridge. Now we're in the Pytchley country. Waterloo is the nearest covert. From there Captain Anstruther Thomson had his great run. I reckon Mr. Mills of Bosworth was the last man alive what was in that hunt.

That were a great run. They met at Arthingworth,

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and had a nice hunt round Loatland Wood. About two o'clock they draws Waterloo, and away goes a fox over the tunnel, and runs beside the railroad up to Langborough, over the road—I'll show you the place in a minute where he crossed to Shipley—then turns north as straight as a die to Bowden Inn, eight miles, along the high ground you see on the right. The Master got a fall on the top of the hill. Then they makes for Thorpe Langton, and as if for the Caudle; but the fox didn't enter it—left it on the left. Mr. Hay gives the Master his horse there, and he takes another fall; and then over two plough fields—the only two they crossed all day—out of which he has another, but gets his second horse soon after. They runs straight through Glooston Wood on to Goadby, where they turns for Keythorpe. Here Tommy Firr—he were Second Whip then—gets a view of him. An hour and fifty minutes, twelve miles as the crow flies, and eighteen as hounds ran. They may have changed there, for the pace slowed down as they ran by Hallaton, Fallows Closes, Slawston, to the river. He ran the bank for a mile before he turns for Medbourne and on to Blaston, where they whips off, as it was dark about 5.30. Three hours and a half, and near thirty miles they run. They were nineteen miles from Kennels, and the Master and Captain Clark takes hounds home, and gets there at 10.30; and blow me tight! if the



By W. and R. Barrand, 185

THE MEET AT CRICK

Key to the Picture of the Pytchley Hunt



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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 W.B. Stirling, Groomer, Esq. | 17 Mr. Herbert Langham, Esq. | 33 B. Rooper, Esq. | 41 John Weatherstone, Esq. |
| 2 John Lovell, Esq. | 18 George Payne, Esq. | 34 J.E. Hartley, Esq. | 42 C. Arkwright, Esq. |
| 3 Gough, Esq. | 19 R. Oldacre, Esq. | 35 Aveling Tanguay, Esq. | 43 The Duke of Buccleuch |
| 4 Fitzwilliam Knightley, Esq. | 20 The Duke of Devonshire, Esq. | 36 G. W. Wake, Esq. | 44 Lady Marzane Atterton |
| 5 The Duke of Devonshire, Esq. | 21 Mr. Weston | 37 Henry Hall, Esq. | |
| 6 Pack, 1st Whip | 22 Lord Bute, Esq. | 38 Fitzwilliam Newland, Esq. | |
| 7 W.C. West, Esq. | 23 The Earl of Arundel | 39 W. Sayce, Esq. | |
| 8 Ned 2nd Whip | 24 R. Bevin, Esq. | 40 - Isham, Esq. | |

Pytchley

Master didn't turn up at the Harborough Ball at midnight, and danced till morning. He rode four horses, and took four falls. Captain Mildmay Clark of Spratton was the only man to finish with one horse.

There's Waterloo, just over the railway; nice snug little place for a fox; belongs to Mr. Pickering, who always has a fox there.

This is Oxendon. Anywhere from here for four miles you won't go straight without three or four purlers. Biggest rideable country in the world; all grass too. I saw seven men fall at one fence, and three broke their collarbones.

See that brook? I once see'd Lady Dalmeny, what was, jump that on a grey horse. She were a one'er. I never saw a prettier sight than her putting a horse at a rasper. His Lordship, when he hunted here, weren't as good as her—seldom got to the end of a good hunt. He didn't look where he was going in those days, and was ollers on his back. Broke his horses' nerve over facing them, he did.

Talking of hard men, there was that there Captain Parker—hunted for years from the Barricks at Northampton; first man at the meet and last home. I've seen the whole field stand still and say, "Where's Tony?"—and on 'ud come the Captain, and make a hole for 'em. Had six horses, and the whole lot only

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cost him twenty-five pounds: that one he'd bought out of a cab, and the others were give him as incurably wicious. Lor! if they wouldner go for him, they was bad. Killed in the War he was.

There on the left is Arthingworth, where Squarson* Rokeby lived—a proper old gentleman, with a white beard and all; a rare foxhunter; hunted till he died at over eighty. His son the Captain put hisself down, he were that worried over taxes and that there Lloyd George. Now a Lord Nunburnholme has it. He married one of Lord Bath's daughters. A real nice lady she is; likes hunting too. He keeps a big lot of horses—had thirty-six beginning of last season. His cousin, Captain Fairfax, hunts with him.

Mr. Perkins lives at the white house you see in the trees. A lot of folks has been there. There was Mr. Cust, away back in the sixties; and then Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bentley—her that's Mrs. Harry Mills now, over at Langton. Mr. Bentley were a wunnerful man—nothing he couldn't do—school a young 'un, ride a race, play polo, cricket, billiards, golf, write poetry—real good stuff, what anyone could understand—play the pianer, sing; and such a nice gentleman too. Everyone loved him. She's a nice lady too; no one looks better on a horse, or knows one better. Mr. Perkins was one of the last gentlemen to keep a coach

* Squire and Parson.

Pytchley

in these parts. Don't seem to care much for hunting nowadays.

Just here's where the Waterloo fox crossed to Shipley—just below Kelmarsh Hall. You must stop here; there's a rare lot of history round Kelmarsh, there is. Turn in at the gate; Mr. Tree won't mind. Just given up being Master; very popular he was, and his lady too. Got into Parliament, poor gentleman. I hope it don't spoil him for hunting, same as it has many others. He generally has a lot of young gentlemen staying with him—Mr. Astor, Mr. Robin Buxton, and Mr. Head, I remember partic'lar as going well. Miss Astor was staying there when she broke her back. It were a miracle she recovered. She's Lady Willoughby de Eresby now. You get a better view from the drive. Look over there; you can just see that church. That's Harrington. That belonged to the Hon. Charles Tollemache. They say he gambled it away in a night to Lord Bateman, what owned this here place. Lord Bateman pulled down the old house at Harrington; but it didn't do him no good; he had to sell it to Mr. Naylor what won the Derby Horserace with Macaroni in 1863—father of Miss Naylor. There's a horse-woman! She's Mrs. Alfred Straker now; lives over in the Cottesmore country. Every horse I ever see'd went kind for her; such hands, and such a seat. Begging her pardon, she ain't as young as she were; but

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on her day she still takes some catching, as some o' they Melton gurls have found out. Captain Lancaster owns Kelmarsh now. He lives in the little house just down that road, and is the grandson of old Sir Claude de Crespigny. Hard breed them de Crespignys.

There used to be a rare tree-climbing breed of foxes here—climb like cats they would, and lay along a branch and watch the fun. But a keeper and one of the tenants fell out, and they mostly vanished. Each blamed it on the other. It's a great pity, for you could ollers get a good start with 'em on a bad scenting day.

That's Scotland Wood. It belonged to Mr. Reginald Loder, what died last year. A great loss to foxhunting; though he didn't hunt much of late. I've see'd that covert draw'd three times, and three foxes come out of it the last time. Cut it, burn it, shoot it; don't matter a bit; you'll find a fox in it. This is Maidwell where he lived—nice place and beautiful garden they tell me; see'd many a fox in it I have. Turned into a school now, and a gentleman called Murton, from Lunnon, has the land.

They tell a tale about Squire Payne o' Sulby; wery popular he was with everyone. He was a-riding home, when he sees a wery pretty gurl a-sitting on that there gate; so he passes the time o' day with her, and after a bit of a chat, she ask him if he knew where the primroses grew. So the Squire, he hitches his horse



"BAY"
(CAPTAIN W G MIDDLETON)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1883

Pytchley

up to the gate, and goes off with her to look for 'em. When the Squire get back, all he finds is his bridle; the horse, not being interested in flowers, had rubbed it off on the gate. The Squire had seven miles home in his top-boots—no motee-cars or telephones in them days.

Blue covert is away on the left. It's a nice little covert that. When the Royal Horse Guards, what they call the Blues, was quartered at Northampton a hundred years back, they built it to link up Scotland Wood with the Monday country.

This is Hoppin Hill, where the Empress of Austria held her steeplechases for that there Captain Middleton, what used to pilot her, to win. He lived over there at Hazelbeach, where Mrs. Ismay is now. No, not there; that's where Colonel Borwick lives, what married his daughter. He was Master of the Middleton. Right breed they Middletons; always throws true. Captain George, what married Mrs. Byass's daughter, is another good 'un; so's she; both's hunted here donkey's years. Captain Borwick used to go as hard as anybody, and his children take after their parents. I saw Mr. Peter give his horse up to the First Whip one day.

Away on the right is Cottesbrooke Lordship—belonged to the Langhams. You knowed Sir 'Erbert. There was some lad for you. I ought to have told

Rum 'uns to Follow

you about this at Kelmarsh. Sir 'Erbert were ollers desperate hard up; but real popular he were with everyone. He was one that could steal a horse, as the saying is, and did, too; that is to say, he never paid for 'em; bought all his forage from the farmers the same way, and they say Goodall the Huntsman paid the men out of his savings. Things got so bad that the brokers seizes the horses, and the gentlemen at the meet has to bail 'em out. Well, they got a bit tired like of it, so they asks Mr. Foster of Spratton to be Master, and fixes it all up—has a general meeting, just to confirm it, at Kelmarsh. They were all congratulating him, when someone comes out of the Hall and says that the farmers weren't a-going to see Mr. Langham starved, and voted him back as Master. But next year Lord Spencer—the Red Earl they called him—took them off him. He were King of Northamptonshire, he were. No one ever been like him. Such a way he had with him. Owned half the county too. Mr. Whyte-Melville used to say he was the best man he ever did see across a country, though he ollers rode very slow at his fences. It's a funny thing that, ever since he had the hounds, no Master has ever been a hard swearer. He had 'em that drilled and a-feared of him: like a regiment of soldiers they were. All he had to say were, "Gentlemen, please," and they does.

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Mr. Wroughton, Lord Annaly, and the Lowthers were just the same. I reckon Colonel Lowther, now that Major Burnaby has given up, is the best Field Master in England. Captain Brassey—him what had the Heythrop—has Cottesbrooke now.

This is Lamport—belongs to the Ishams. They've been here a time, the Ishams have. What? A time I said. Why, about three hundred years here; but they was a goodish while afore that at Isham and Pytchley. They've turned it into a club now. A lot o' people are hunting from it.

Lord Ludlow lived there for some years. He was a rum 'un. Fly into a rage at nothing, he would—curse and swear something awful; if it hadn't been for Her Ladyship, he'd never have had a servant in the place. Ever heard about the "half-guinea fox"? Well, it were here it happened—down at Scaldwell Spinney. The foxes had killed Her Ladyship's swan on Sunday, and eaten it, and on Monday they met here. The fox was real heavy with swan, and got chopped in covert. Mr. Loder, by way of a joke, says to Mr. Paget:

"When you buy Sulby, you must provide us with guinea foxes; these half-guinea ones ain't no good."

His Lordship heard him, and he didn't half carry on; if the hounds hadn't gone off, I do believe he'd have killed him, he was that angry. With all that he was a kind-hearted, open-handed gentleman, when not

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put out. He had the heaviest hands I ever did see in a man on a horse.

See they stone swans on the gate? About a hundred years ago some of the young gentlemen at the Hall was a-skylarking with 'em, and one of 'em dropped on the Baronet's nephew, and killed him dead as a door-nail, it did.

That house on the right is Sir Charles and Lady Frederick's. He were Master just after the War. Very popular he were. He was Secretary afore the War. Her Ladyship has hunted here all her life; no one knows the country better, or sees more of a hunt than she does. A fine judge of a horse too. Sir Charles, he sends accounts of the hunts to the Lunnon papers, and is writing the history of the Hunt.

They always say they Pytchley ladies are the greatest thrusters in the Shires. I remember Mrs. Byass—that's Mrs. Faber—Mrs. Renton, Mrs. Pat Nickalls, Miss Steele, Mrs. Jenkinson, Miss Naylor, and Miss Fenwick, what married Mr. Cartwright. They was terrors to go. Lor lummy! as I holds this stick in my 'and, there weren't a team as could have given 'em half a pound, not in all England. There's some good 'uns now, and young 'uns coming on too. There's Mrs. Jock Campbell, and her sisters the Miss Rhodes's from Flore, the two Miss Nickalls's, Miss Cayzer, Lady Pat Mackay, Miss Styles, Mr. Drummond's and

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Mr. West's young ladies, and a lot more, who'll keep the tambourine a-rolling for some time to come.

There's Mrs. Lowther too, she's a great help to the Colonel. Beautifully turned out she is—same as Mrs. Cazenove of Cottesbrooke, what ollers has a little bunch of violets. When Lord Annaly were Master—Mrs. Lowther's his daughter—he couldner abide ladies riding astride; wouldner have 'em out, if he could a-help it; quite right too, I says; I must say it's far safer, but they don't look so nice. Mrs. Lowther's just the same: if a lady or child ain't turned out just right, they don't half hear o' it—or if they do any damage either. She has at Major Paget one day, for coming out in rat-catcher. "Don't tell anyone," he says, "but I am due at Leicester gaol at 2.30!"*

Now we're coming to Brixworth. Squire Chaplin lived in that funny thatched house, and next him old General Brabazon. They were two old-fashioned sportsmen. I reckon no one ever knew more about hunting than Squire Chaplin, and though he weighed nigh on twenty-two stone, and was getting on for seventy, he always, not only managed to see the end of the hunt, but could tell you more what hounds had done when he got home.

He had such a grand manner. If ever anyone did

* Alas! quite true; I was a regular "in and out" at that time.
—Ed.

Rum 'uns to Follow

anything for him, he thanked them in such a way as you went away happy, feeling it was him that had done you the favour. He was a great man with his wittles. He had a bad fall, and broke his ribs, and got pneumony—very bad he were. Sir Alfred Fripp comed down to him, and finds he'd ordered a goose, a hare, and a snipe for his lunch. He protested it 'ud kill him; so the Squire says :

“Well, if you thinks it's too much, I'll forgo the snipe!”

Good plucked 'un the Squire.

General Brabazon—Bwab they used to call him—he were a great friend of the Squire's. The last gentleman what ever I see'd in a blue bird's-eye satin stock and a hat with a great curly brim. I remember he fell into the brook between the Fieldside and Elkington—went right in he did, and fair made the water boil the things he said into it.

A rare lot of soldiers used to come to Brixworth. There was the two Captains Brassey, the Hon. Tolle-mache, the Hon. Lambton, and Major Feilding. They last two, they tells me, is real Generals now, and so's Captain Weir. There was a young gentleman they used to call the Bandboy, who went well. Then there was Captain Squeak Sutton, grandson of Sir Richard. He were a desperate hard man; lamed a terrible lot of horses. Mr. Meyrick—he's Master to the New Forest



"BWAB"

(LT.-COL JOHN P BRABAZON)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1886

Pytchley

now—and Major Anderson, Sir Charles and Captain Lowther, and a lot more I've forgotten. Funny thing how few of 'em be dead; but I reckon hunting with the Pytchley learned 'em to move quick, and have an eye for a country. Nothing like foxhunting to make soldiers, so they do tell me.

These are the Ironstone pits each side. A rare lot of sportsmen, they iron miners. I reckon they'd kill anybody what killed a fox. There are a lot of stone walls just round here. You'd be surprised at the way they stops the gentlemen. It's a very funny thing that they don't seem to mind how big a timber is, or how wide the fences are; but show 'em a stone wall, and most of them will go miles round. That's Brixworth Hall. That's where old Mr. Lee Bevan used to live; he was one of the best men with the Pytchley for nigh fifty years.

You'd like to see the Kennels, Sir, wouldn't you? I know Mr. Barker would be only too pleased to show 'em you, even if you haven't got much time to look at the hounds. These here Kennels ain't much to look at, are they? worst as ever was. Lord Annaly made a very big mistake in not rebuilding them back in 1911, when they sold the Cottesbrooke Estate. Why, in those days he could have raised ten thousand pounds as easy as a weasel slipping through a hedge. These bitches are very small, aren't

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they, Sir? But lor, they're quick. There was a gentleman once as stayed with Lord Annaly, what come to see the hounds, and he says in an aside to Parson Legard:

“Why, they look to me like a pack of harriers.”

Well, the next day the hounds meet at Fawsley, draws Badby Wood, and runs half-way out towards Shuckburgh; turns back again just under Badby Wood; and the knowing ones slipped up to the road, thinking he'd gone back. A gentleman that couldn't hold his horse, what used to live at Brixworth Hall, then jumps out of the road, and he sees a hound take the line down the fence. He holds up his hat and gives the holloa. Freeman claps on the pack, and away they goes. Never checks till they get to Plumptre Wood, a clear ten miles into the Grafton country; on to the brook down by Wappenham Station, which takes a pretty good toll, and then goes right away on to Silverston, where the fox turns back, and they kills him close to Wappenham village. It were a thirteen miles' point; only half a dozen were up at the end out of three hundred. Captain Sowerby were riding a little grey horse; and when it got to Silverston, he fair laid down; never thought he'd get up again. Lord Annaly and Freeman said it was the best run they'd ever seen in all their lives. The next day being Sunday, the same gentleman comes and has another look at

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the hounds. He hadn't been with 'em since Badby Wood, and Freeman says, slylike :

"I hope them harriers didn't go too fast for you yesterday, Sir."

That Parson Legard were a rum 'un and no mistake—quite one of the old school. Old-fashioned way of talking he had. A gentleman once asked if he'd walked over to the Kennels.

"Walk, my dear boy, walk? I regard walking as a most plebeian mode of progression for the human biped."

What reminds me of him and Lord Annaly. Funny thing, His Lordship never knowed where he were; never see'd a man with a worse memory for a country.

One day, cubbing it was, and a bit thick like, we'd met at East Haddon, and had a run, and killed just outside Cank covert.

"Where on earth are we?" says His Lordship.

"If you cast your eye over your shoulder, me Lord," says the parson, "you'll see the chimneys of your noble mansion."

He weren't half a mile from his own front door!

One gentleman tells a tale: he were chipping his Reverence that he knew more of hunting than the Bible, and he didn't know whether you spelt the brook Cherith with a K or a C.

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“Sir, I only know two brooks, the Cottesbrooke, belonging to my noble patron, Sir Herbert Langham, and the Braunston, and I can spell and jump them both.”

Behind those Kennels lived a wunnerful old lady, Mrs. Drake, the widow o’ Parson Drake of Cottesbrooke. He were one of the three famous brothers from Shardloes, and were reckoned the best of ’em. She piloted and looked after the Empress of Austria’s ladies, when they was at Cottesbrooke Hall. She said she’d not hunt after she was seventy; but it took her a powerful long time to get there. Ride anything, she would; one of the very few women I’ve ever see go on a bad ’un. She were a funny old lady to look at. The Empress used to give her dresses; she never altered the style of ’em, or gave up wearing a chestnut wig to the day o’ her death. She were always talking, but never said an unkind word about anyone. Very good to the poor she was too—used to go and look after anyone ill after a hard day’s hunting. There weren’t any motee-cars in her day. Fifteen miles to the meet, and often twenty home.

The Hall’s empty; belongs to Squire Wood; he lives in that house on the right as we comed in.

Squire Bevan lived there for forty years—he what married old Mr. Loraine Smith’s granddaughter. His daughter lives at Spratton now. Mr. Luke White—



"A JUDGE"
(REV. C. LEGARD)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1901

Pytchley

what's Lord Annaly now—had it last. Great pity; for it's a nice house, and has good stables.

The Pytchley always has their opening day here. Then they draws Holcot covert. That's a grand bit of country—nothing like it in the Shires; stone walls, banks, and brooks. The valley from Lamport or Faxton carries a grand scent; it runs down to Pitsford.

I'm sorry you haven't time to see more of the hounds.

Good-morning to you, Mr. Barker, and thank you very much.

He comed from the Middleton country, and I reckon will make a rare good huntsman; only hopes he's half as good as Freeman were. Frank hunted the Pytchley Hounds—twenty-five years it were—as long as any huntsman what ever hunted with the Shires, except the Belvoir huntsmen. If ever there were a honest-to-God fox-catcher, his name's Frank Freeman. I think he would have fair cut his throat of the man what did it on him, if he ever thought he was hunting a bagman or a drag. Though he didn't know it, the Buckby shoe-hands used to have a game with him. There's a little covert out by Buckby way called Vanderplanks; didn't often hold a fox, so they used to get one from out of a drain under the railway, and turn it down there just afore the hounds arrived. One Christmas Eve it was, they had a very good run

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from there, killed their fox out by Crick, if I remember right; and round his neck were a label: "For Frank Freeman, with best wishes for a Merry Christmas from Long Buckby." Lor, he were angry! Felt he'd been fair put to shame; and the more the gentlemen and Lord Annaly laughed, the worse he took it.

They say hunting ain't democratic. You see that place? That's the Workhouse.* Fine looking building it is too. There was an old fellow, what lived there, what used to hunt regular. No one knew quite how he kept his horse; but I guess the gentlemen's grooms and the farmers used to give him a bit of corn. Mr. Eldred used to let it run in his field. He was ollers known as the Sporting Pauper, and when his old horse died, he died too.

Just pull up here a minute. That's Pitsford over there. A lot of Masters used to live there—Mr. Osbaldeston, Captain Anstruther Thomson. I remembers Mr. Ernest Courage lived there. He was a funny gent—great big fat man with a face like a moon. He were a comic. A real hard rider, and would sing comic songs all night long. He sold out to Colonel Barry—him what used to try and look after the Prince of Wales at the War. That were a real hard job, that were, trying to keep His 'Ighness out of danger. They tells me he was always giving him the slip, and

* We presume Dick means the Public Assistance Institution.

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getting into the front-line trenches. It was from there that the Prince first learned his hunting. The Pytchley's his Mother Lodge. I reckon he couldn't have had a better tutor than that there Mr. George Drummond. I don't think I've ever see'd a much harder man to hounds than him—beautifully mounted, but fair reckless. A very amusing man he is, though a bit hasty at times—he were very badly wounded in the War, and always wears a cap, 'cause he has a bit of his forehead shot away, as big as your hand; but he don't care. He were very angry when that there Mr. Asquith—him what married that Miss Tennant I told you about—called hisself Lord Oxford and Asquith, seeing as how Mr. Drummond ought to be the Earl of Oxford, him being the last of the De Veres; so he calls a racehorse of his Ox and Ass. Mrs. Drummond died last year—a very sad loss. Very popular she was, and no lady went better; she left four little girls, who all come out as keen and pretty a two couple as ever you did see.

I never see'd a man take to hunting more natural than His Royal 'Ighness. Of course, like all young 'uns, when he first began, he'd take his own line, and was never happy if he weren't in front. Of course, he took a powerful lot of falls; and then all those silly fellows on the newspapers, every time he did have a fall, would put it in the papers, saying he'd been

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thrown from his horse, instead of saying the horse had fallen; so that some people seemed to think that His Royal 'Ighness was ollers on his back, and couldn't ride for toffee. But to-day, I reckon, there ain't a dozen men in the whole of England, what goes as straight as he does, and takes less falls, or will get to the end of a run more often than him. And such a nice gentleman he is too! You wouldn't think that he were a Prince. Ollers ready to take his turn at opening a gate, or catching someone else's horse, or giving a helping hand, where it's wanted.

I once see'd him fall at Quenby; and when a gentleman goes to pick him up, his head was amongst his horse's heels. The gentleman asks him to sit quiet a minute, till he's sure he is all right. He only damns, and tells him not to wait and miss the hunt, as he'll be all right in a minute; and he was quite angry when he wouldn't leave him, till he was on his horse again.

When he first started after the War, the wire wasn't down, as it is now; so the Master, Sir Charles Frederick, tells off about ten of the hardest riders to see His 'Ighness didn't jump a fence afore they found out it weren't wired. They had their work cut out, I can tell you. Once he drops his whip in a fence, and turns back, and baulks one of 'em jumping the fence. After the hunt were over he walk right over to him,

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and apologises to him, same as if he were any ordinary man—only very few has the manners to do it.

The gentleman says, there weren't nothing to apologise for; but the Prince says:

“If you'd done it to me, I'd have said a lot.”

Beyond there is Moulton, where Mr. Nethercoat lived—him what wrote “The History of the Pytchley Hounds.” You can just see down along this road a funny thing that looks like a church steeple. That be an old Hawking Tower; belongs to Boughton, where the ladies used to stand and watch 'em hawking down the Nene Valley. There's another at Short Wood near Lamport. Mr. Whyte-Melville used to live at Boughton. He wrote those books “Market Harborough,” and “Holmby House.” It's all about the country just round here. You ought to read that.

Lord Chesham lived at the Hall—a wunnerful popular gent. Lord Annaly thought no end of him. Fair cast a gloom over the country for the whole of the season, when he broke his neck out Daventry way. They put up a memorial to him, with a very pretty epitaph, at the bottom of the hill by the water trough. He would have liked that.

“I shall pass this way but once;
therefore, if there is anything
I can do to help my fellow man,
let me do it now, quickly, as I
shall not pass this way again.”

Rum 'uns to Follow

General Archie Seymour—Captain he was then—brought him home; and now he's gone and died very sudden; a great loss he is; about the best Secretary the Pytchley ever had; he'd such a way with him; married Mr. Bucknall's sister from Brixworth. He used to be a first flighter, till he lost his money. He still lives at Brixworth, and you never hear him complain—a real good sportsman.

His other sister married Captain Aubrey Knight. They hunted from Welford for years. Their son, Mr. Dick, was one of the best boys I ever see'd—him, and Mr. Oswald Bretherton, what was killed in the War, poor lad.

General Howard Vyse sold Boughton to Mr. Panther. He don't hunt, but is a good fox preserver, which is the next best thing.

Mr. Ronald Henderson had it before him.

I was telling you about Sir Herbert Langham. When he had no horses, Lord Chesham sent him what he reckons his two best. Sir Herbert he looks over 'em when they come to the meet, and says to the groom:

“You take 'em back and thank His Lordship very much, and tell him, I never would ride horses with bad shoulders, and I'm too old to begin now.”

Turn down this lane. Lor! how this thing do bump about. You ought to have borrowed Mr.



"STAND AND DELIVER"

(COLONEL ARCHIE SEYMOUR and CAPTAIN LICHFIELD)

The Tontler, 1930

Pytchley

Tweed's pony and trap. There's a fine sportsman. You never sees him doing much; but ever since I can remember, he not only pops up at the end of a hunt, but was always there or thereabouts. Nothing of a skirter about him. Captain Poyser was another of the same kind. Wunnerful fond of hunting, him. Lost a leg, poor gentleman; still comes out in a pony and trap. Breeds a rare good terrier, does the Captain.

This in front of you is reckoned to be one of the finest lines in the Pytchley country; Spratton Valley they calls it. Away from Saunders's Gorse on the other side, to Holcot, Clint Hill, or Lamport; you can't beat it. The River Nene runs right down it. There be some famous leaps. Down there, where you see the smoke of the train, is Knightley's Leap, a rare ugly place; a great blind bullfinch, and nigh twenty feet of water beyond it, and four or five feet drop. This be called Merry Tom's Lane, after a favourite horse of Lord Spencer's, what broke it's back just away on our right. Oh, I've seen some funny sights in this here brook. I see'd two ladies once; one of 'em has a cut at it, and the other's after her like a shot out of a gun. The first one, Mrs. Cayzer, gets over with a scramble, but the other one just catches her, and sends her flying. Then, last year—believe me or believe me not, but it's the living truth,

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as I sits in this 'ere kerridge—the bank gives way with Mr. Tree, and he and his horse they goes right under, and when they pulls him out, blest if there weren't a fish in the pocket of his coat. Now we turn to the left for Brampton. That's near where they used to run the Army point-to-point. A cruel big course it is, too, right away over to Holmby. That house on the left is where Lady Adelaide Dawnay lives. All her daughters were that fond of hunting. She married Lord Downe's brother. This be all Spencer property.

It weren't till about the eighties that the Pytchley ever had a Hunt Committee. You see, what with Lord Spencer, the Knightleys, Lord Overstone, and the Langhams, owning nearly three-quarters of the country between 'em, if they agreed, there weren't nobody to say 'em nay. Well, they elects Lord Downe as Chairman of the Committee. After it was all over, the Red Earl, he says to him :

“So you've got your damned Committee; but I want you and everybody else to understand that, while I am Master of the Pytchley Hounds, I'll brook no interference from them or anybody else.”

It's a funny thing about that Committee; they was elected for life, and for years the majority were that old, they didn't hunt at all, or only one day a week—and that on the road. One day Major Paget was asked



"SMARTNESS"
(MAJOR VISCOUNT DOWNE)

Varsity Fair Cartoon, 1883

Pytchley

if he were on the Committee. "Good God, no!" he said; "I still go out hunting." Things improved after that, and they all hunt now.

A fine gentleman the Earl was, in spite of the fact that he called hisself a Radical. He knew, as well as anybody else, you couldn't run a hunt on this democracy, any more than he could Ireland, when he was Lord Lieutenant there.

The Drages live over there. They're a fine pair of horsemen, and they don't half know how to sell horses neither. As one of the American gentlemen said :

"They could sell a horse which didn't exist, to a motee-car that didn't want it."

Now we comes to Althorp, where Lord Spencer lives. The proper name for these hounds, though there are very few people now who knows it, is the Pytchley and Althorp Hounds. Though they ain't always been Masters, the hounds were started by the Spencers, and they've always had a big finger in the pie. The Red Earl was Master three times. The first day little Lord Althorp comes out, about four years back, they had a hunt of over an hour. It weren't very straight; His Lordship feeds his foxes too well for them to go far off from home, and there were too many of 'em; but they killed this fox, and Freeman blooded His Lordship. They'd never been off his

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father's ground. That can't happen in many places in England nowadays.

Along on the right you see Holmby, where Lord Annaly used to live. The house is quite new; only the gates of the old palace are left. That's where King Charles the First was imprisoned.

You wouldn't believe how easy it is for accidents to happen. I remember—some years back it is now—towards the end of the season it were, when foxes are very hard to find round here—they're all drawn into Harlestone Heath or Nobottle Wood—we hadn't roused a fox by three o'clock, and were trying the Fish Pond below Holmby there, when a regular towrow starts, and we all gets ready for a gallop; but they'd chopped him. The Whip—Lawrence, I think it were—goes in, and, after a bit, comes out—white with rage he were—a-holding a trap, with the fox's pad still in it.

Miss White, she says, "It must have brought it here."

"No," says Lawrence, "it were pegged to the ground."

"Then it must be some poacher," says she.

"Well, it's got His Lorship's coronet and an A on it," says he.

It were along the right o' this road they used to hold the point-to-point in Lord Annaly's time.

Now we're coming along to East Haddon. John

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Cooper lived there. He were a fine gentleman of a yeoman, same as the Clarks, Underwoods, and Attenburys. I once stood on this road, and I counted no less than fifty-six farmers, and all mounted. Lord Seymour had a special button for 'em, which he used to give 'em, and they all used to come out in black coats and velvet caps. When he were in Ireland he had twenty of 'em over once, and mounted 'em with the Kildare. All his own tenants they were, and those dirty, ragged Irishmen, they'd never seen such a sight in all their born days. He used to have a cavalry escort out to protect him; but if they followed His Lordship, I reckon they was in greater danger than 'im.

Lord Horne—him what commanded the First Army; a fine gentleman he was—hunted here ever since he was a subaltern at Weedon. At the Hall is Colonel Scott Robson, what married Miss Guthrie, what owned it.

This is what we call the Wednesday country. It's still pretty good, but not so good as it used to be, with all the big estates being broken up. That's Buckby Folly we be passing now; belonged to Major Haddock, and now to Captain Rathbone. Watford covert is away on the right. Lord Henley lives at the Court. Great fox-preservers they Henleys be. Captain Elm-hirst always said he thought that Crick was the best covert in the whole Pytchley country. The fences

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were always weakest round here; and suppose that's why it was so popular with the Rugby men from Warwickshire. Very different from the Harborough side. There was some funny ones from Lunnon—Captain Budd and Mr. Oppy Wheeler. Captain Budd was supposed to have fought in the Crimea; only died a year or two back; broke his leg, poor gentleman, when he was over eighty; reckon that killed him; but Mr. Wheeler he always prided hisself on arriving last in every hunt, he did, and he was wery put out if anybody ever tried to wait for him.

You see those telegraph poles running almost up to the covert? They are on the old Watling Street what runs from Canterbury to Holyhead. It's one of the few bits which has never been touched since the time the Romans made it. Now we turn to the right.

Harry Rich lived there—the horse dealer. Only man I ever knowed who dared be funny with the Pytchley: ollers having his jokes with people. The best one was with the Atherstone though. Pretends he were an Amurrican going to take the hounds, and wanting a lot of expensive horses. Gets Drage and Darby to send their best for him to try. Goes up to the huntsman and says: "Say, huntsman, do your dogs trail well?"

Disguised hisself with a great black beard. All goes well the first day; but the second off comes his beard in

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a bullfinch. Them dealers didn't half go on; he'd busted their horses along something cruel.

One gentleman had tried several of Harry's horses, and then bought one from Darby. Harry were very put out: so he goes up to the gentleman's second horseman one day, and says:

"You're to take this horse to my place, and I'm to ride the one you're on. It's no use you taking that lunch back; you'd better let me have it."

Harry cracks along, and the gentleman can't find his second horse nowhere. Harry takes the horse six miles out of its way, and sends the second horseman back with a note, to say as he'd took the ride to find out what kind of horse the gentleman really liked, and he'd supply him with as many horses same as that for fifteen or twenty quid apiece.

Poor fellow, he got hisself into a lot of money troubles, and what with falls on his head, he went and shot hisself one day.

Now we are coming to the old racecourse, where the Grand Military Races were first held. Many's the time I've seen Captain Bay Middleton win there. Now, you see, it's the Imperial Wireless. They builded it right where Hillmorton covert used to be. That was a danged shame. Why they thick-heads from Lunnon couldn't have pitched on somewhere else, except the best fox covert in the whole of the Warwickshire

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country, I dunno. If old Sir Albert Muntz, what built the house over there, had been alive, he'd never have had it, that he wouldn't. Mrs. Little, who owns it now, she were a Miss Brassey, and a real knowledgeable foxhunter, same as her sons are—as good young gentlemen as ever go out hunting. Colonel died last year. He were a great loss. He was one of those what brought the polo cup back from America the first time.

Turn to the right here, and then we'll see Lilbourne covert—one of the strongest coverts in the Pytchley country. Mr. Cross of Catthorpe looks after it. I reckon he's hunted here as long as anybody. He's got another nice little covert, which he made on the other side of his house, called Tomleys. They've had some rare good foxes out of Tomleys, they have, and twice they run 'em right away to Gumley in the Fernie country—a twelve-mile point it would be—and a kill. If they hadn't killed that first fox, you would have sworn that it were the same one. He ran exactly the same line, field for field, he did.

Mrs. Tate has a farm just by Tomleys. She's wunnerful clever with the farmers for getting the wire down. The foxes generally run up towards Shawell and Misterton, where Lord Cromwell lives now. We shan't have time to get round there.

Turn to the right here, and we'll go through Stanford Park. This belongs to Lord Braye—a rare sports-



FRANK FREEMAN'S FOLLOWERS

("UNCLE" ROMER WILLIAMS, CROMWELL, ADAM CROSS, GEORGE MIDDLETON, GEORGE STANLEY, FRANK FREEMAN, T E MARSON OF CRICK, HAROLD LOWTHER, MOL LITTLE, PAT NICKALLS, JIM CROSS)

The Bystander. 1927

Pytchley

man—don't hunt hisself, but is one of the best fox pre-servers in the whole country. A beautiful park this, full of wunnerful trees. You see them stumps? From here to Kilworth used to be one of the most beautiful beech avenues in all England—were planted by the owner of Stanford to celebrate the Battle of Blenheim, I think it were; but when Lord Braye had to sell this part of the property, the fellow what bought it cut 'em all down. It were just like this bit at the bottom we's going through, right away back to that gate, more than a mile. Were fair sacrilege!

Over to the right you can just see the Yelvertoft Fieldside. That belongs to Major Willie Styles, the best man to get wire down in the Pytchley country. Some of his farmers ain't too sweet neither. He has a famous grey, one of the best hunters in Leicestershire; his wife's keen too, pretty little lady. It's a favourite covert on a Wednesday. They generally runs across to Winwick Warren, where Captain Ransom lives. Last year* the Pytchley had a wunnerful hunt over that country. It was the last day of the season, and they'd been mucking round the Althorp Woods, trying to reduce the number of foxes, and in the end they persuaded Colonel Lowther to have a try at the Holmby coverts. They're always a bit doubtful at the end of the season, being very small like. They goes

* 1932.

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on to Saunders's; it was nigh six o'clock by then; and after a run round after a vixen, the old dog fox goes slap away, down across the point-to-point course, right-handed through Guilsborough, and up to Winwick Warren. It were that dark you could scarcely see across a field, and at ten minutes past seven they stopped the hounds at Elkington. It were pitch dark then, and a snowstorm comes on, and some of the gentlemen didn't get home till nigh ten o'clock. I reckon that were a good finish for Barker's first season.

Now we'll come along by the Hemploe, and up to the top of Honey Hill. You get a grand view from there. You can see mostly the whole of the Pytchley country, as well as the Fernie. Those woods you see right away to the south, that's Badby Wood, and Shuckburgh away a bit to the right, in Warwickshire. Then turn round and look to the north, and you sees clean across Mr. Fernie's country, right away to the Charnwood Forest and the Coplow. Away on the right, looking east, you see over Naseby, and on to Lamport again. I says this is the grandest view in England.

That red house is Naseby Woolleys, where a Mr. Edward Fitzgerald lived, what owned a horse called Omar Khayyam; but I never heard tell what it won.* Major Renton has it now, and let it to the Duke of

* Dick is wrong here. Fitzgerald translated the Persian poem.

Pytchley

York for two years. The Duke's a good horseman, and is always well up, and don't mind a fall neither; but he ain't got the devil the Prince has. We was all very sorry when he gave up, but hope to see him again soon.

They say the road from there to Naseby is haunted by a headless horseman. I've never seen it, but I often know a horse to shy and shiver at nowt, as I've ridden on there after dark.

I've also heard the Hunter's Horn,* as plain as anything. Some say it's Will Goodall. He were very fond of that part of the country. It's a sign of a long frost. Just beyond the Woolleys is George's Spinney. One day they killed a fox latish, by Sulby covert, and the Master asked Major Paget which was the quickest way to George's Spinney.

"Follow me," says the Major, and off he trots quick through a line of gates; then he breaks into a gallop, calls to Freeman, and jumps the boundary fence between Naseby and Sulby with the Avon beyond. It were the shortest way; but a lot of 'em didn't like it in cold blood. They still calls it "Guy's short cut."

Now we'll come back down by Welford. That house on the right is where old Mr. George Gee lived.

* This has often been heard. Some think it's wild fowl flying very high.

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He was one of the grandest type of yeomen, same as his brother John was. Old John had a collection of photygraphs of all the famous people who'd hunted with the Pytchley ever since photygraphs were invented—Empress of Austria, Prince of Wales, Lord Spencer, and all the Dukes and Duchesses. Old George he reckoned he knew every fox within ten miles of here by name. The gentlemen used to make rare fun of him over it; but old George didn't mind. He had the finest cellar of port in the whole country, he had, and used to drink a bottle a day, and two on Sundays. When he were eighty-four he caught pneumony on a Wednesday through getting wet through, and on Friday, when the doctor comes, he finds old George mortal bad; but he has two bottles of port beside him, and he just wheezes out to the doctor, that he wants him to try some, which the doctor does; and old George asks him what he thought of it. The doctor, not knowing quite what to say, as it were a bit new and raw like, and not wanting to put the old gentleman out, says :

“Well, I reckon as it's not so good as your usual, Mr. Gee.”

To which he answers, “Of course it isn't, you damned fool; it's 1926; but I wanted to know if it was worth laying down.”

They buried the old gentleman, they did, on the fol-

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lowing Tuesday, and all the Hunt were there. They don't seem to breed 'em like that now. There was Mr. Brittan and the two Browns over in the Monday country, and old Mr. Ashton of Lubenham—he rode in the Waterloo Run—and Mr. Fox. No, the young 'uns don't seem to be as good as they old 'uns were.

This is Sulby now we're in. Belongs to Major Paget, what lives over there on the left now. He's let it to an American gentleman called Mr. Pearson. He and his wife are both desperate keen. Mr. Pearson he takes a rare lot of falls, but don't seem to care. There's the Hall; used to belong to the Paynes. Mr. George Payne lived here when he first had the Pytchley. He were the most popular Master the Pytchley ever had; but the silly fellow went and ruined hisself racing. He sold it to Mr. Fred Villiers; he was Master too, and Lord Hopetoun lived here when he was Master. They used to have the Summer Kennels for the hounds here in those days. Down on the right there is Sulby covert, and away more to your right is Naseby Field. If you find a fox in Sulby covert, he's got to go two or three miles before he can get to another one. From here to Naseby is probably the best line in the whole Pytchley country. See those woods on the left? They be called the Hothorpe Hills. They're neutral between the Fernie and the Pytchley. They belong to Mr. de Trafford. He's living at Sib-

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bertoft now. He and his daughter are great supporters of the Hunt. The Trafford Gorse is one of the surest finds in England. On the right there is where the Hon. George Stanley lives—one of those gentlemen as good a foxhunter as ever there was; but he got hisself mixed up with politics, and was sent out to Indie. What he wanted to go out there for, when he could stop at home and hunt foxes here, Lord only knows!

Then this house here belongs to Mr. Marshall Field. They tells me he's one of the richest men in America. Wunnerful fond of foxhunting he is too, and so's his wife. No one loves it better; has a beautiful stud of horses; but I reckon they don't get as many days' hunting in a year as Mr. and Miss de Trafford do on their two horses. Fair beats me, it does, such folks.

Down there at the bottom is Squire Ewins's; he owns all the land round here to the Marston Hills. In his house there's the famous picture of the Meet at Crick. You ought to go and see that picture. I reckon it's one of the finest pictures that ever was painted in the world. I knew a good few of 'em in it. There's Squire Payne, Mr. Villiers, Lord Brudenell; and I reckon all the grandfathers of them as I've been a-telling you of are in that picture.

Now we're through the village of Marston Trussell.

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These fields on the right and left they still calls the Slaughter Field. It was here that the remnant of King Charles's cavalry were caught in the arm of the river, and fair cut to pieces, they were. Nineteen of the officers were buried in that little churchyard.

That red house is Thorpe Lubenham. Sir Harold Wernher, Master of the Fernie, lives there. He got it off Mr. Gordon Cunard. Away back in the eighties, there weren't a man in Leicestershire could beat Mr. Cunard—real tiger he was to go.

Now away over the bridge; we're in the Fernie country coming into Lubenham. A fine bit of country this, but hounds seldom run over it. See that little house there, just beyond the church, by the river? That's the old Manor House, where King Charles slept the night before Naseby, so they tells me. They have the very chair he sat in in the church. Well, we be getting into Harborough again now. I reckon we'd better put up at the Angel. That and the Swan are two of the oldest houses in England, and both very comfortable.

Over a glass and a chop, further information about the Pytchley and its Masters was forthcoming. If the last bit is a little diffuse, perhaps the second bottle of black strap is to blame.

Lord Spencer was a great Master; there was never a better man to hounds, or keener. Carried the horn

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hisself, he did. He might have been the greatest huntsman of his time, only he would 'ave stuck to it. He would go to Lunnon, and get hissself mixed up with that there Mr. Gladstone, what couldn't do nuffing but cut down trees. He makes him a Lord Admiral or something, and sent him out to Ireland. Fair mucked up his life, he did. Hunted these hounds hissself for fifty years, he might. It's a shame to see such a great man like him a-wasting his life and opportunities as he did.*

Now Mrs. Fernie, she were quite different. She did make proper use of her chances; never missed a day's hunting, when she had a horse; never went to Lunnon, or got into a train—just the same as Mrs. Faber what had the hounds with her. Poor lady were killed by a train, crossing the railway. Weren't that bad luck? She were the neatest figure on a horse you ever did see. She rode in a brown habit and a brown billy-cock hat; never cut out the work, but was always right up in front, and never seemed on bad terms with a horse, or ever on a tired one.

* John Pointz (1835-1910), Fifth Earl Spencer, K.G., P.C.; Lord Lieutenant Northants, 1872-1908; M.P., 1857; Lord Lieutenant Ireland, 1862-1874, 1882-1885; Lord President of Council, 1880-1883 and 1886; First Lord Admiral, 1892-1895; Member Prince of Wales' Council, 1889-1901; Keeper of Privy Seal, 1901-1907; Master of Pytchley Hounds, 1861-1864, 1874-1878; Woodland, 1878-1880; Pytchley, 1890-1894.



THE PYTCHLEY, 1878

(EARL SPENCER CAPTAIN MIDDLETON EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA)

From an original for the Earl of Spencer

Pytchley

She were one of those that kept theirselves to theirselves; she would never set foot in anyone's house, and even after cubbing would have her snack in her car within a hundred yards of a house where they'd have done her proud. But to try and be civil-like to her was just like stroking a tortoise.

Talking about the Pytchley Masters, you see Sir Herbert let the country down a lot, seeing as how hard up he were, and Lord Spencer letting other things interfere with his hunting; so that, when Mr. Wroughton took over from him, the country were in a bad state. He set about it, and did what Mr. Coup-land did for the Quorn. There was never such a man for coverts—what he didn't know wasn't worth knowing. Will Goodall was huntsman, and had the two Isaacs as his Whips. There never was such a team to catch foxes as them three. John and Charles killed as many foxes as Will hisself. Fine horsemen they were, too. Charles went to Mr. Fernie, and, when Will died, John carried the horn with the Pytchley; but he was not as good a huntsman as he was whip.

Mr. Wroughton was a great hound man, and improved the Pytchley no end. When he gave up the Woodland, which he took after he gave up the Pytchley, he sold his hounds for over £4,000.

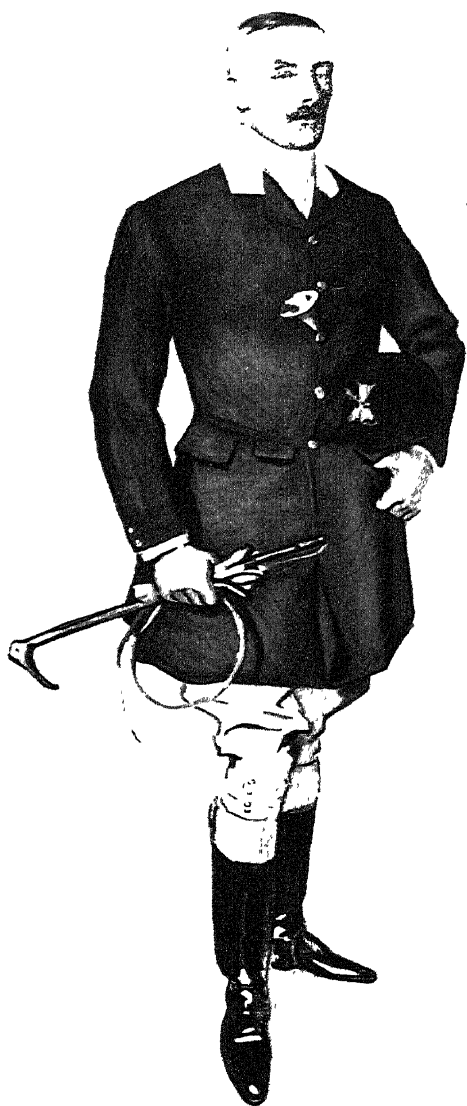
Very quiet he was; never said an unkind thing to

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anyone; and some there was that took advantage of it. After John became huntsman, sport weren't so good, and a certain lot o' gentlemen started to grumble—mostly squatters they were. That didn't help things, and they treated Mr. Wroughton very shabby, they did; so he resigned, and went to the Woodland, and Lord Annaly took 'em. "Lucky Annaly" they called him, and lucky he certainly was. He had a way with him, and could get work out of anyone. He was the most successful Master the Pytchley ever had; and after he got Freeman from the North, the Pytchley showed better sport than any pack in England.

Funny Lord Annaly should be so successful, too, since he knew nothing of hounds, not his own by name, and as I said, he didn't know where he was, even on his own doorstep; and spent most of his summer in Lunnon. Mr. Legard, he helped with the hound breeding, and Mr. Wroughton looked after the coverts, while Mr. Pelham, and after him Sir Charles Frederick, saw that the farmers were sweet.

Then he had Mr. Gibbs as his studsman, as I said before, the best in England. But His Lordship was always in front when his hounds ran, and had a wunnerful command over his field; never was a better Field Master.



LORD ANNALY

Vanity Fair Cartoon. 1910

Pytchley

He didn't hit it off with an American gentleman, Mr. Ambrose Clarke, what hunted from Welford. Once over by Teeton he jumps a awful place with a drop, as Freeman was a-casting his hounds.

"Very pretty, Mr. Clarke, very pretty; but do you mind coming back again," says His Lordship.

No one thought he would, or could; but he does, and without a fall, and His Lordship took his cap off to him. Mr. Legard took him down once, his first season. His Reverence had been skirting, and heads the fox; as it weren't the first time, he call him down proper; but His Reverence don't say a word till he'd finished; then he says:

"Ah, my Lord, you have much to learn, much to learn."

Once he call out, "Ware seeds"; but Harold Brown o' Sywell, a hard-riding young farmer, took no notice.

"Ware seeds," said His Lordship again. "Come back at once."

"They're me own, me Lord."

"I don't care whose they are, but you do as I tell you when out with these hounds."

Another time he rates a man for riding turnips.

"Very sorry, I did not know they were turnips."

"If they were boiled, with mutton in the middle of 'em, I suppose you would."

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No, I think that were Major Burnaby.

Once Mr. Chaplin* jumps a gate when hounds weren't running hard, and gets told of it.

"But I didn't break it, Master."

"No, but you'll bring twenty other fools after you, one of whom will, and let the cattle loose on the road," says Lord Annaly.

He was the youngest looking man for his age you ever see'd—looked forty when he were sixty. He might be here now, if only he had stuck to hunting; but he went out to Indie with the King and Queen, left Sir Charles Lowther in charge, and he comed back an old man; never seemed to take any interest in hunting after that. He resigned the year of the War, when Sir Charles took 'em. He was a very different man to His Lordship—a great heavyweight, and rode the very best cattle as straight and as hard as any man; but he had bad luck. That there war spoilt all his fun. He took out the Yeomanry, and didn't get any hunting for the four years he had them.

Her Ladyship carried on for him, and right well she did it under tremendous difficulties. She was always delicate, and found it too much for her, though Mr. Wroughton helped her all he could; but he was an old man, and his son's death in the War—such a nice young gentleman he were too—was a great blow to

* Reggie, not the Squire

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him. Colonel Coote lost his son too, and Mr. Landon were killed—all from Creaton village.

Things weren't easy—too many women and too few men; and they all wanted a finger in the pie, and started quarrelling; so in 1918 Sir Charles chucks it, and Mr. Wroughton goes to hunt with the Quorn. He was killed a year or two back—broke his neck trying a new horse in the Belvoir Vale when he was over eighty. He were never properly valued, he weren't—never put hisself forward.

Then Colonel Faber comes along—him what used to write such funny accounts in *Horse and Hound*. A tremendous great man he was. He'd married Mrs. Byass. She still hunts—a wunnerful old lady, and up to a year or two ago took some beating over a country. No one has ever gone better than her over the Pytchley, or kept it up longer. She was joint Master with Mrs. Fernie for some years. She had a funny accident down below Buckby Folly. A gentleman what had got thrown out sees two yokels a-looking into the bottom, very interested like; so he sings out to them cheery like:

“What are you looking at? Got a man in there?”

“No, Sir,” says they, “it's a lady.” And, sure enough, there she was a-pinned under her horse, with its nose wedged round to its round bone. How both got out safe and sound is a miracle, it was. The

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Colonel couldn't get on with Frank; he didn't take hunting seriously enough, and would crack jokes with Freeman, who didn't like it. He were always quoting bits of that Mr. Surtees. Once he offends him terrible by singing out to him at the end of a hunt:

"A bottle of gin if you kill him!"

Frank, he says as how he wanted no reward to kill his fox; and besides, he didn't drink gin!

Again, they bolts a fox from Creaton covert, and the Colonel he says joking-like to John Isaac, what was doing terrier man and sort o' Whip:

"What did you put on him, John?"

Frank heard him, and offered to resign on the spot, at the very idea of him hunting a readied fox.

He mounted his men well in spite of the War, and sold his horses when he gave up at an average of £300 apiece. The Prince gave him £480 for one. Sir Charles Frederick took them next; but though he showed very good sport for two seasons, they were a bit too much for him. Everyone was very sorry he gived them up. Since then one of the Lowthers, Sir Charles, or the Colonel, has been Master, with some other gentleman to help 'em. When Lady Lowther died, Sir Charles left the country, and hunts hounds hisself up in Cheshire way.

It was a sad day when Frank blew his hounds home at Moulton for the last time.

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I'll never forget that day. The meet was at Harlestone Heath, and they had quite a nice hunt out towards Pitsford, which they drew in the afternoon.

The Duke of York wanted the little Princess Elizabeth to see the greatest huntsman of the age; so they sent her pony over, and posted it at the corner of the covert, and the fox he were very obliging, and hops over the walk not five yards away from her, waves his brush at her, and she holloas away Frank's last fox. Out comes the hounds, and all the field; so she had a grand view; but they didn't kill him, though one hound had hold of him at Moulton.

There never has been, and never will be, another Frank. D'you know, he had no other thought 'cept foxhunting? Dreamt about it. The only interest he had was that—and boxing. He loves a good fight. Riding home with hounds he'd never speak if he hadn't killed his fox—nor at his supper neither. He would be a-thinking all the time, where he had missed him, and, as he said, put his hounds wrong. He would wake up in the middle o' the night, I've heard say, and tell his poor wife all about it.

He were a cruel hard man to serve; but them as had the guts to stand it got all the best jobs in England—Tom Agutter of the Fitzwilliam Hunt, Gordon Knight—him what was killed with the Old Surrey and Burstow—Harry Ashley with the Surrey Union, Will

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Bodington with the Whaddon, Will Freeman, his brother, what was with the Grafton, Jack Lawrence of the Heythrop, Bert Peaker of the Fernie; not a bad lot, and I've probably forgot a few.* One gentleman praised young Knight his first season; but Frank he says he would never be no good; and when asked why:

“What do you think I caught him doing the other evening? I caught him whistling, yes, whistling in the Kennels; and I hadn't caught my fox!”

They ollers said Frank had the best nose in the pack. He could race a fox to death, and cast his hounds at a gallop if scent allowed of it; but he could walk a fox to death better than any man in England—never gived up while there was a chance.

I see'd him once cast his hounds from the cemetery at Harborough on to beyond Farndon, with only a hound a-feathering every quarter mile—not a sound. He jumped a fence, and within a yard of where his fox was laid down as cold as mutton.

Fearless horseman he was too, and none better till he broke his leg over wire in a gap below Farndon. He never had a good grip after that. I saw him once down by Waterloo get hung up at the iron hurdles there—real big 'uns, over four foot.

A gentleman what was on the other side gives him

* George Gillson, to Colonel Bovill, 1934.

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his horse, and Frank casts on over the next fence, when up jumps the fox behind 'um. Off goes Frank blowing his horn, and over the iron rails, as if they weren't there. He never went through a gate till they kills below Arthingworth House. That's the country Mr. Gordon Cunard used to say you couldn't go three miles without three falls and your horse stone cold—the fences are that big and strong. Mind you, Frank had never been on the horse afore; but he saw red, when he see'd his fox. The Althorp Park wall, nor the sea, wouldn't a' stopped him, if he thought he could get at him. He got a bit cunning in the end, and if there were a nasty fence—it had to be real nasty—he'd ask for a lead. The gentleman what owned that horse I just told you about offered to try, but Freeman says very quiet:

“Not him, Sir; his leads ain't no good to me. Let one of the Weedon gentlemen go. He'll break it.”

You very seldom saw Frank on a tired horse; and he never wanted a Second Whip, he had such command over his hounds. When they had made their cast, he just gived a low whistle, and they would fly to him faster than a dozen Whips could turn them. He never let a Whip put the thong on 'em. You never saw such a steady pack. I see'd near Kilworth three deer, what had escaped out o' Stanford Park, running within a few feet of where the fox had gone, and through the

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same gaps; and they took no more notice of them than if they'd been cows. Used his horn very little, and was always very quiet; but I never heard a sadder sound than when he blew his hounds home. Fair wail it was.

No flattery turned his head. He was the best honest-to-God foxhunter that ever threw leg over saddle, or blew a horn. I shan't see his like again.

He killed such a lot of foxes his first year, one of the keepers tells him he's too hard on them; but all Frank says is :

"It's my job to kill, same as it's yours to preserve them."

Frank took a lot of falls; but the worst almost he had was off his feet. He'd run a fox to ground at Alford Thorns; and as he went to get on his horse, he slips and breaks his elbow. That was his last season but one. He suffer a lot from it.

Talking of bagged foxes. In Mr. Wroughton's time, they met at Kilworth. A farmer drives up, and tells him he'd got a fox, what had done a lot o' damage, in his gig. He'd caught him in his fowlhouse. Mr. Wroughton goes and has a look at him, and didn't like to throw him to the hounds; so he tells him to take him to the Sticks, and give him a run for his money. As bad luck would have it, Charles Isaac and his Whip were a-doing some work in Walton Holt; so they comes across to the Sticks to see the fun. They climbs

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up a haystack, and see the whole thing. Charles didn't let his brother hear the last of it for a long time. They had a great run, and killed him at Peatling. There was a stranger out going well, and someone asked John who he was.

"The Bell of New York," says John.

It were Mr. Ikey Bell what hunts the South and West Wilts. Another stranger has O.H. on his buttons, and someone asks what Hunt they were. Mr. Bentley says:

"Oh, I know 'im; 'e 'ails from 'Ull—'Olderness 'Unt."

There are not a lot of bad accidents in the Pytchley; the fences are too big and strong, and those who ain't well mounted goes by the gates, or waits for a gap to be made.

I've seen only two men killed—Lord Chesham, and Mr. Fenwick, what fell on the flat.

Sometimes a horse gets staked on a wire post, but very seldom. The horses seem to see 'em, and swerve in the air; sometimes they breaks their backs at the bottoms. Men get hurt by riding too slow at their fences. They ain't got the pace to break 'em, and they falls into the ditches, and gets underneath 'em, and so trodden on or kicked.

The great thing to do when a man gets under his horse is sit on the horse's head, and put a saddle over

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the man's, and then tie the horse's legs together with stirrup leathers, and roll him off. Never put a man on his feet till he's sure he can stand. If he's knocked out, cover him up with coats and keep him warm.

I see a nasty accident down by Swinford covert before the War. Mr. Church fell at the first fence, and was dragged on the near side; his horse kicked at him half across the field. There was only one man in front of him—on the side he was being dragged. If that man had gone for the horse's head, it would have turned away, and brought the man's head into the horse's heels. So the gentleman takes the risk, and charges the horse just behind the saddle, and knocks him right over, releasing him what was being dragged.

An officer out from Weedon follows too close, and jumps over a man what was stuck in a ditch. He lets a real torrentious volley of abuse at him; so the officer circles round to apologise, when, blow me tight, if his horse didn't take the bit in his teeth, and jumps clean over again. The man in the ditch thought he'd done it a-purpose, and asks him to spare his life.

I only once heard Colonel Lowther swear, and that was down by Swinford, when a stranger knocks him over at a fence, and when the Colonel asked him how as what he thought he was a-doing, and if he'd never larned any manners, the fellah says to him: "As I am

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a cavalry officer I consider as I knows how to behave.” And then the Colonel really does let fly good and proper for about a minute and a half without repeating hisself.

When Sir Charles Frederick was Master he takes a fall near Dodford and a young Weedon officer, what went wery hard—a Mr. Lucas it was—jumped right over him, catches his horse, and comes back to apologise. Sir Charles thanks him for catching his horse, and afore he could say anything, asks him if he knew who’d done it. Mr. Lucas, he says it were the most dreadful thing he ever see, and helps him on to his horse, and never lets on to Sir Charles it was him. He escaped lucky.

There was a Mr. Grant Ives down Daventry way; he noticed a fox always crossed the brook near his house; so he goes and marks the best place to jump with a newspaper. Sure enough hounds finds the fox, and over the brook he goes. Down come Mr. Ives at his newspaper; but his horse shies at it, and in they both go, head over heels.

That reminds me of a lady and gentleman what rode very jealous o’ each other; they both jumped into a pond, and Lady Greenall call out to them :

“My dears, come out; the Melton Urban Council don’t allow mixed bathing.”

That were one of Captain Elmhirst’s jokes : when-

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ever hounds ran over the Braunston Brook, he used to say, "Mixed bathing was freely indulged in."

It was him as said you couldn't see a hunt with the Pytchley on a bad horse—fairly good 'uns only broke your nerve, and only the best was good enough.

It's a most 'strordinary thing that of all the men what I ever knew to be killed riding, Lord Ludlow was the only one what wasn't a first-class horseman, and he fell over a wire fence in the dark, and got pneumony.

No, as I was saying, everyone who hunts now is better behaved than they was. You see, you don't get them fellows out of the towns you did on horseback; they rides stinking bikes, or are in cars, if they comes at all; or play golf, which don't do no one any harm. Not that I ain't see'd them on horses as would be better and safer in a cart with a pig net over it. Them as do come out have no excuse now not to know summut about hunting; there are so many books wrote about it—and riding, too—some of 'em are—would you believe it?—quite sensible; one I was give—by Colonel Brooke—him what rode Combined Training in the Horse Shows—used to hunt with the Pytchley—he tells a lot of sense; and that funny book by Colonel McTaggart—Lor lummy! how I did laugh at the pictures—"Colonel to Subaltern" it's called.



"BELVOIR"

(SIR GILBERT GREENALL, BART., NOW LORD DARESBURY)

Vanity Fair Cartoon, 1899

Pytchley

Riding's improved no end, too. Why, nowadays, children is taught to ride. In my day they was just put on ponies, with no mouth and a snaffle bit, and sent round a paddick with bare knees, till they cease to fall off, and were then supposed to ride. Now they has Pony Clubs, where they are really taught to ride, and their ponies are properly bitted. But mark this, riding can be overdone. You find them what's considered the best riders are generally not the best men when hounds lays down to run. They's generally a-thinking too much about how they will put their horse at a fence, and how they will look when they gets the other side, that they gets further and further behind. It's much easier to trirrip across a field and hop over, than collect a horse going full gallop at a nasty blind place; but it's them as gallops what gets there, even if their backs are muddy. There was a Captain de Something or other—make and ride a horse as well as any man I ever saw: real brave he was—but he were never in the picture when hounds run.

Then, again, there ain't one in a hundred what can gallop—I really means Gallop. People talk of bad starts, and never being able to catch up; but look at Mr. Pat Nickalls, Mrs. Lowther, Captain Jock Campbell, Colonel Hubbersty, or Mr. Frank Stops. Hounds will be out of the other end of a covert, and

Rum 'uns to Follow

they will start last, not first; but in two fields they be in their old places—right in front again. It's just setting down and riding fast at the first fence or two, as it comes along.

Them young officers from Weedon have done a lot to improve riding; you don't now see what used to be called the Spring Captain; but you do see a lot of red ribbons on horse-tails nowadays, especially ladies; weren't allowed to bring 'em into a crowd in my young days. A lot of people don't seem to understand that, if the leading men pull up in the middle of a field to give hounds room, it's just as bad to go past 'em as to take their place at a gate or gap. It's bad enough to press hounds when they're running, but it fair make me sick to see 'em walked over, and pushed off the line. No sort o' sense in it.

Well, I've never hunted anywhere but in the Shires all me life, and I take verry good care I don't. I'd rather ride in them than hunt anywhere—danged if I wouldner.

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